



Health and Wellbeing of International Students in an Australian Tertiary Context

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Statement of Ethical Conduct

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

Abstract

The rapid growth of international students in recent years has attracted enormous research interest from different disciplines. Due to the transition to an unfamiliar environment, most international students have experienced various degrees of physical and psychological adjustments. How to help these students maintain a good state of health and improve their psychological wellbeing has become a very important issue worthy to be studied.

This study was conducted with a research aim to investigate international tertiary students' health and wellbeing in an Australian regional area. A mix of quantitative and qualitative research method was used to gain deeper insights into the issue. A 60-item questionnaire was utilised to collect quantitative data. A total of 341 international students in the University of Tasmania were recruited to complete the questionnaires. Meanwhile, 20 international students and 5 university staff in the same university were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews to explore their perceptions of the issue in an in-depth manner. Quantitative and qualitative data collected were analysed respectively by Predictive Analytics Software (PASW, version 18) and NVivo (version 8).

The findings indicate that academic issues, basic living conditions, financial worries, social contact and racial discrimination are factors significantly influencing international students' physical health as well as their psychological and social wellbeing in the new environment. Demographic variables including age, gender, length of stay in Tasmania and English proficiency are also influential factors. There are eight coping strategies frequently used by the students. Family, friends, university and community are identified as four main sources of support. Lastly, this study also provides some recommendations for enhancing international students' health and wellbeing in their acculturation into a new social and cultural context.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	viii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to this study.....	1
1.2 Significance of the research project.....	7
1.3 Research aim and objectives	7
1.4 Overview of the research methodology.....	8
1.5 Ethics considerations.....	10
1.6 Limitations of the research.....	10
1.7 Structure of the thesis	11
1.8 Conclusion	13
Chapter 2 Literature Review	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 The concepts of health	15
2.3 The concept of sojourner and international students	17
2.4 Theoretical framework of intercultural contact.....	20
2.5 Adjustment problems.....	29
2.6 Health-related behaviours.....	45
2.7 Coping strategies	49
2.8 Social support	54
2.9 Conclusion	57
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	59
3.1 Introduction.....	59
3.2 Research aim and objectives	59
3.3 Research approach	60
3.4 Research methods	62
3.5 Stage I: Quantitative research	63
3.6 Stage II: Qualitative research	74

3.7	Conclusion	79
Chapter 4	Quantitative data analysis	80
4.1	Introduction	80
4.2	Response rate	81
4.3	Data analysis	81
4.4	Participants' demographic socio-demographic profiles.....	82
4.5	Descriptive statistics of participants' responses	90
4.6	Factors that influence international students' satisfaction and their wellbeing	97
4.7	Relationship between adjustments problems and psychological health.....	136
4.8	Conclusion	152
Chapter 5	Qualitative data analysis	153
5.1	Introduction	153
5.2	Qualitative data analysis	153
5.3	Results	158
5.4	Conclusion	203
Chapter 6	Discussion	204
6.1	Introduction	204
6.2	Research objective 1: adjustment issues	204
6.3	Research objective 2: Demographic factors in perceptions of adjustment issues	224
6.4	Research objective 3: Coping strategies.....	227
6.5	Research objective 4: Social support.....	230
6.6	Research Objective 5: Suggestions and recommendations	238
6.7	Conclusion	242
Chapter 7	Conclusion	244
7.1	Overview	244
7.2	The research journey.....	244
7.3	Overall discussion of findings	246
7.4	Recommendations and implications	253
7.5	Future of the research.....	256
7.6	Conclusion	257
References	259
Appendix 1	Ethics Approval	277

Appendix 2 Ethics application280
Appendix 3 Published papers.....310

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Number of enrolment of international students in Australia from 2002 – 2009. Adapted from Australian Education International	3
Figure 1.2. Australian Export Income from Education Services from 2005 to 2009. Adapted from Australian Education International	4
Figure 2.1. Berry’s acculturative strategies: Integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation (Berry, 1997)	24
Figure 3.1. Research design of this study.....	63
Figure 4.1. Distribution of participants by gender	83
Figure 4.2. Distribution of participants by age.....	83
Figure 4.3. Distribution of participants by country of origin.....	84
Figure 4.4. Distribution of participants by academic faculty	85
Figure 4.5. Distribution of participants by degree currently pursuing.....	86
Figure 4.6. Distribution of participants by length of stay	86
Figure 4.7. Distribution of participants by English proficiency	87
Figure 4.8. Distribution of participants by marital status	88
Figure 4.9. Distribution of participants by type of accommodation.....	88
Figure 4.10. Distribution of participants by primary source of financial support.....	89
Figure 4.11. Distribution of participants by ownership of car/bike	89
Figure 4.12. Distribution of participants by physical health	90
Figure 6.1. Prices of accommodation	213

List of Tables

Table 3.1 <i>KMO and Bartlett's Test</i>	68
Table 3.2. <i>Total Variance Explained</i>	68
Table 3.3. <i>Results of Varimax Rotated Factors</i>	69
Table 4.1. <i>Participants' views on questions Q13 to Q18</i>	91
Table 4.2. <i>Participants' views on questions Q19 to Q26</i>	92
Table 4.3 <i>Participants' views on questions Q27 to Q31</i>	93
Table 4.4. <i>Participants' views on questions Q32 to Q33</i>	93
Table 4.5. <i>Participants' views on questions Q34 to Q40</i>	94
Table 4.6. <i>Participants' attitudes on questions Q41 to Q47</i>	95
Table 4.7. <i>Responses' attitudes to Q48-Q60</i>	96
Table 4.8. <i>Results of Mann-Whitney U test on Q13 - I am satisfied with my accommodation by gender</i>	99
Table 4.9. <i>Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q19 – I am satisfied with my English ability by gender</i>	99
Table 4.10. <i>Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q42 – How often do you eat vegetables by gender</i>	99
Table 4.11. <i>Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q43 – How often do you eat fruits by gender</i>	100
Table 4.12. <i>Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q44 – How often do you skip your breakfast by gender</i>	100
Table 4.13. <i>Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q45 – How often do you smoke by gender</i>	101
Table 4.14. <i>Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q46 – How often do you drink alcohol by gender</i>	101
Table 4.15. <i>Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q57 – Try to look at it from a positive way by gender</i>	102
Table 4.16. <i>Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q18 – I feel safe in Tasmania by age</i>	103
Table 4.17. <i>Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q22 – I am satisfied with my academic performance by age</i>	103
Table 4.18. <i>Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q25 – I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania by age</i>	104
Table 4.19. <i>Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q26 – I feel included in my class by age</i>	105

Table 4.20. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q42– How often do you eat vegetables by age	106
Table 4.21. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q43– How often do you eat fruits by age	106
Table 4.22. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q49 – Take a direct approach to deal with the problems by age	107
Table 4.23. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q15 – I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania by length of stay in Tasmania	108
Table 4.24. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q17 – I am satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania by length of stay	109
Table 4.25. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q30 – I have many friends at the university by length of stay	111
Table 4.26. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q32 – Racism occurs in Tasmania by Length of stay	112
Table 4.27. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q33 –I am treated unfairly because of my cultural background by Length of stay	113
Table 4.28. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q34 – I feel homesick by Length of stay.....	114
Table 4.29. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q38 – I feel tired easily Length of stay.....	115
Table 4.30. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q41 –How often do you eat fast food by length of stay	116
Table 4.31. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q44 – How often do you skip breakfast by length of stay	117
Table 4.32. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q47 –How often do you have exercises by length of stay	118
Table 4.33. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q18 – I feel safe in Tasmania by English level	119
Table 4.34. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q20 – I am satisfied with the academic staff by English level	120
Table 4.35. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q21 – I am satisfied with the admin staff by English level.....	121
Table 4.36. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q22 – I am satisfied with my academic performance by English level.....	123
Table 4.37. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q24 – I am familiar with the university educational system here by English level	124
Table 4.38. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q27 – I am used to the Australian accent by English level.....	125

Table 4.39. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q28 – I make friends with local people easily by English level	126
Table 4.40. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q29 – I have many friends at the university by English level	128
Table 4.41. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q30 – I have many friends at the university by English level	129
Table 4.42. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q39 –I feel motivated to study by English level	130
Table 4.43. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q47 –How often do you have exercises by English level.....	131
Table 4.44. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q48 – Make a plan for next steps by English level.....	132
Table 4.45. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q49 – Take a direct approach to deal with the problems by English level.....	133
Table 4.46. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q50 – Focus on solving the problem, and put other things aside if necessary by English level	134
Table 4.47. Mann-Whitney U test on Q15 I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania by ownership of car or bike	136
Table 4.48. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q14 I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania and Q34 I feel homesick.....	137
Table 4.49. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q28 I make friends with local people easily and Q34 I feel homesick.....	138
Table 4.50 . Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q34 I feel homesick.....	138
Table 4.51. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q18 I feel safe in Tasmania and Q40 I feel restless in Tasmania.....	139
Table 4.52. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q20 I am satisfied with my academic staff and Q40 I feel restless in Tasmania	139
Table 4.53. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q20 I am satisfied with my academic staff and Q39 I feel motivated to study	140
Table 4.54. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q29 I have many friends at the university and Q40 I feel restless in Tasmania	140
Table 4.55. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q35 I feel upset easily	141
Table 4.56. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q14 I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania and Q36 I feel lonely in Tasmania	141
Table 4.57. Results of Spearman’s rank-order test on Q20 I am satisfied with my academic staff and Q37 It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends	142

Table 4.58. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q21 I am satisfied with my admin staff and Q37 It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends	142
Table 4.59. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q29 I have many friends at the university and Q37 it is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends	143
Table 4.60. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q36 I feel lonely in Tasmania	143
Table 4.61. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q37 it is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends	144
Table 4.62. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q13 I am satisfied with my accommodation and Q39 I feel motivated to study	145
Table 4.63. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q14 I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania and Q38 I feel tired easily	145
Table 4.64. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q15 I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania and Q39. I feel motivated to study.....	146
Table 4.65. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q16 I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania and Q39 I feel motivated to study	146
Table 4.66. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q18 I feel safe in Tasmania and Q40 I feel restless in Tasmania	147
Table 4.67. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q20 I am satisfied with my academic staff and Q38 I feel tired easily	147
Table 4.68. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q21 I am satisfied with my admin staff and Q39 I feel motivated to study	148
Table 4.69. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q22 I am satisfied with my academic performance and Q39 I feel motivated to study	148
Table 4.70. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q23 International students are well looked after by the university and Q39 I feel motivated to study	149
Table 4.71. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q24 I am familiar with the university education system here and Q39 I feel motivated to study	149
Table 4.72. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q25 I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania and Q39 I feel motivated to study.....	150
Table 4.73. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q26 I feel included in my class and Q39 I feel motivated to study	150
Table 4.74. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q27 I am used to the Australian accent and Q38 I feel tired easily	151

Table 4.75. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q28 I make friends with local people easily and Q39 I feel motivated to study	151
Table 4.76. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q29 I have many friends at the university and Q39 I feel motive to study.....	152
Table 4.77. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q39 I feel motivated to study.....	152
Table 5.1 Staff participants' backgrounds.....	154
Table 5.2 Student participants' backgrounds.....	155
Table 5.3. Theme 1: Preparation and expectation before departure.....	158
Table 5.4. Theme 2: Transition to a new environment.....	161
Table 5.5. Theme 3: Social contact	176
Table 5.6. Theme 4: Psychological wellbeing	181
Table 5.7 Theme 5: Coping strategies	187
Table 5.8. Theme 6: Social support.....	190
Table 5.9. Theme 7: Suggestions and recommendations.....	198

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background to this study

Due to the development of science and technology and the advances in various means of transportations (e.g. air travel), there has been a rapid increase in global population mobility since the beginning of 20th century, especially after World War II. People move from their homelands to other regions and countries for different purposes and reasons and as different identities, such as tourists, business people, voluntary workers, members of armed forces, international students, missionaries or immigrants. These people are referred to as sojourners. Hamann (2001) defines sojourners “as a product of the vicissitudes of the locale where they are living and/or their own will, are not deeply attached to that place and could readily move or be dislocated” (p. 37). Governments and some private organisations have played important roles in the increasing of population mobility. A number of international aid schemes which were mainly supported by government funds, such as migrant and refugee resettlement plans and educational exchange programmes, have greatly promoted international communication and population mobility. Some private organisations, such as multinational companies, also provided opportunities for international interaction by means of international trades (Furnham & Bochner, 1986).

Among the various types of sojourners, international students have always been a highly visible group. As international education was regarded as an important part of post-war reconstruction (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001), the number of international students increased dramatically after World War II. Later, as the Cold War was exacerbated, student exchanges became more related to political factors and foreign and diplomatic policies (Bochner & Wicks, 1972). Governments and organisations provided more scholarships and funds to encourage students to spend varying lengths of time attending overseas institutions in order to achieve certain political purposes.

However, in the last 15 to 20 years prior to 2010, international education's political factors were de-emphasised since the end of the Cold War. Self-sponsored students have dramatically swelled. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - Institute for Statistics (UNESCO-UIS) (2009), the number of international students has increased by 53% since 1999 with an average annual growth of 5.5%, and by 2.5 times since 1975 with an average annual increase of 11.7% throughout this period. There were 2.8 million students enrolled in educational institutions outside of their country of origin in 2007. This represented 123,400 more students than in 2006, and a growth of 4.6%.

China was the largest students exporting country, amounting to almost 421,100 in 2007. The other major countries of origin are: India (153,300), the Republic of Korea (105,300), Germany (77,500), Japan (54,500), France (54,000), the United States (50,300), Malaysia (46,500), Canada (43,900) and the Russian Federation (42,900). These 10 countries accounted for 37.5% of the world's international students (UNESCO-UIS, 2009).

According to UNESCO-UIS (2009), the United States of America is the largest international education receiving country. In 2007, it hosted 595,900 international students, which accounted for 21.3% world's mobile students. The second largest host country was United Kingdom, which had 351,500 international students in 2007. It was followed by France (246,600), Australia (211,500), Germany (206,900), Japan (125,900), Canada (68,500), South Africa (60,600), the Russian Federation (60,300) and Italy (57,300). The above 11 countries hosted 71% of the world's international students, and the top six countries had 62% of the whole international students.

As the fourth largest international students receiving country, Australia is one of the most popular destinations for international students due to its high education reputation and advanced educational systems. According to Australian Education International (AEI) (2010a), in 2009 there were 631,935 enrolments by full-fee paying international students in Australia on student visas. The enrolments exceeded 600,000 for the first time and represented a growth of 16.8% on 2008

enrolments. Among these 631,935 international students, 232,475 (36.8%) students were enrolled in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, 203,324 (32.2%) students were taken in High Education, which increased by 12.1% between 2008 and 2009. AEI (2010c) statistics show that 56.2% of higher education enrolments were undergraduate study. Among the postgraduate enrolments, 80.0% were at the Master's level, and another 11.5% were Doctoral degrees. Of all the higher education enrolments, 85.8% were doing coursework and 14.2% were research enrolments. Besides higher education, students who were enrolled in English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) were 135,141, which accounts for 21.4% of the whole student enrolments. The rest 10% students were attending various foundation programs. Figure 1 indicates the dramatically increasing number of international students in Australia in the past eight years (2002 – 2009).

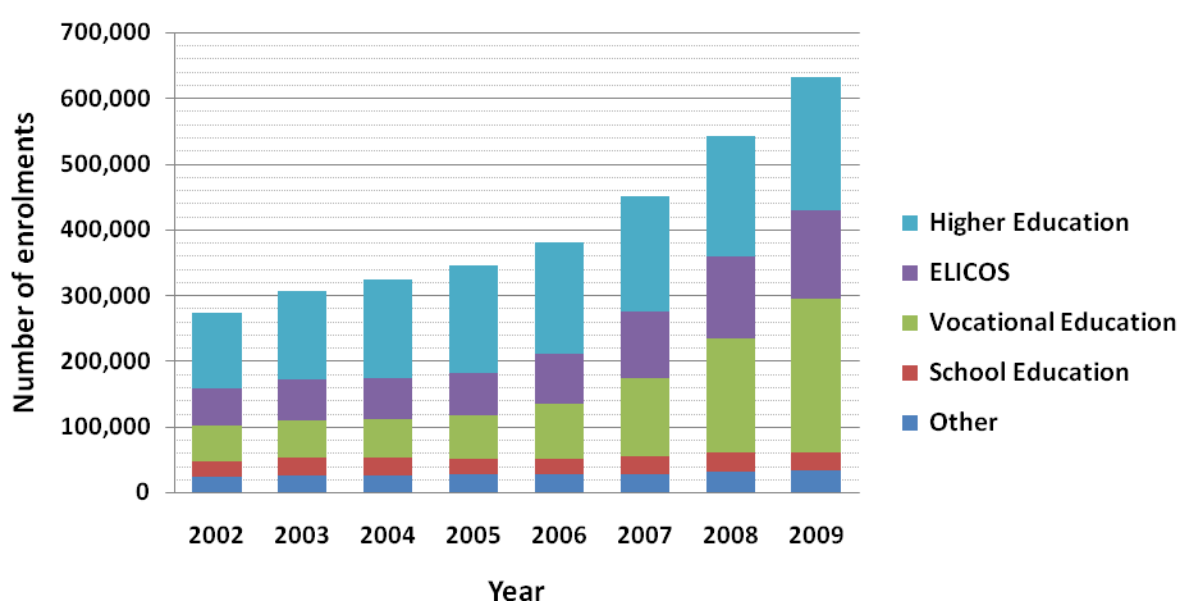


Figure 1.1. Number of enrolment of international students in Australia from 2002 – 2009. Adapted from Australian Education International

In terms of the country of origin, People's Republic of China is the largest student exporter. In 2009, there were 154,777 students from China, which presented 24.5% of the whole international students' population. It was followed by India (19.1%), Republic of Korea (5.7%), Thailand (4.2%), Nepal (3.9%), Vietnam (3.8%), Malaysia (3.7%), Indonesia (2.8%), Brazil (2.8%), and Saudi Arabia (2.0%). These countries

collectively accounted for 72.4% of all enrolments, which increased by 20.5% between 2008 and 2009. Students from the Asian region accounted for 79.3% among all the enrolments, with a growth of 17.2% between 2008 and 2009 (AEI, 2010a).

Due to the dramatic increase of international students in Australia in recent years, international education has become one of the most important fiscal revenues for Australian government and has contributed a great deal to the Australian economy. According to AEI (AEI, 2010b), international education contributed \$18.6 billion in export income to the Australian economy in 2009, which is an 8.1% increase on the \$17.2 billion earnings in the financial year 2008-2009 and an 22.9% increase on the calendar year 2008. Among the \$18.6 billion, the higher education sector contributed \$10.4 billion, which was the largest component of income. Figure 2 demonstrates the Australian Export Income from Education Services from 2005 to 2009.

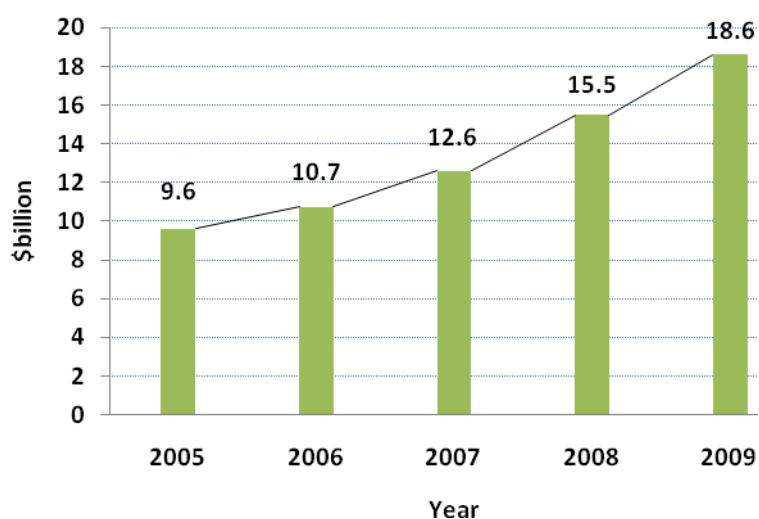


Figure 1.2. Australian Export Income from Education Services from 2005 to 2009.

Adapted from Australian Education International

The above statistics indicated that international students have become a highly visible minority in Australia. Hence, the health and wellbeing of this student group have attracted much attention of the government, educational institutions and scholars from various disciplines. In fact, international students are a group of people who are susceptible to various physical illness and psychological problems, since they transfer from a familiar environment to another setting that is little known with a sea change of their minds and bodies reacting to the new environment. The majority of international students acknowledged that they had experienced one or more of physical symptoms, such as insomnia, frequent minor illness, upset stomach and/or headache and/or psychological symptoms, including loneliness, homesickness, helplessness, irritability and even hostility, social withdrawal and feeling sick in the process of adaptation (Axelson, 1993; Bock, 2008; Sandhu, 1995; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Winkelman, 1994).

A literature review reveals that, there are four major categories of adjustment problems encountered by international students: general living adjustment, academic adjustment, social-cultural adjustment and personal psychological adjustment (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Porter, 1993; Tseng & Newton, 2002).

General living adjustment includes some basic living problems encountered in international students' daily life, which may not become significant problems for them in their home countries. In a completely new environment, these basic living problems become great difficulties which have to be faced and overcome on their own by these international students. These adjustment problems - food, accommodation, transportation and financial problems may become serious problems in their adaption to the new environment.

The second category of adjustment problem is academic difficulties. One of the dominant purposes of international students studying in Australian universities is to accomplish further education and gain a degree and therefore academic-related problems are of major concern to most international students (Hashim & Zhiliang, 2003). However, due to the differences in educational style and cultural backgrounds, most international students would have difficulties in adapting to the

new academic context, especially for those students whose first language is not English (Arthur, 2004; Liu, 2001; Mori, 2000). The major problems and academic adjustments include: lack of proficiency in English, lack of understanding of Australian education system, and exclusiveness.

The third category of adjustment problem encountered by international students is socio-cultural problems. According to the culture distance theory (Hofstede, 1980, 2007; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), the greater the distance is between the home culture and host culture, the more cultural difficulties the overseas students would experience. Therefore, for most Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) students, understanding and adapting to the Australian culture is a great challenge. Their acculturation can be significantly influenced by a number of factors including cultural value conflicts, deficient intercultural communication competency, lack of social contact, and racial discriminations.

The last category of adjustment problem is personal psychological adjustments. Homesickness, loneliness, depression and anxiety are typical negative psychological reaction to the new environment.

A great deal of research studies has been conducted to investigate international students' challenges and experiences encountered in a host country (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Porter, 1993; Tseng & Newton, 2002). However, some research gaps still exist between the literature and the current study. Firstly, few previous studies took the geographic context into account when investigating international students' views and attitudes to the process of the environmental and cultural transition. Secondly, previous studies seldom took international students' demographic factors into consideration. Demographic factors are supposed to be significantly related to a person's responses to a new environment. Lastly, there were few studies investigating and evaluating sources of social support international students obtained in the host society. All these issues raised from literature review will be addressed in this study.

1.2 Significance of the research project

Sojourners have always been an important group of people in relation to cultural contact theories. International students, as one of the most typical types of sojourners, not only share the same characteristics with other types of sojourners but also have typical characteristics of their own (Bochner, 1973; Bochner, McLeod, & Lin, 1977; Klineberg & Hull, 1979). Therefore, studying on this group of students would make contributions to refining theoretical perspectives.

Also, international students help enrich the cultural diversity not only of Australian educational institutions but also of the whole society. The relationships between domestic and international students would be the basis of international connections that are likely to serve Australia's interests well in the future (Robinson, 2009) .

Besides, the significantly increased number of international medical students, who choose to remain in Australia after they have completed their studies, provides a very welcome addition to the country's overstretched health workforce (Robinson, 2009).

Additionally, international students have made an enormous economical contribution not only to tertiary institutions but also to the nation (AE, 2009). The implications of this research can provide beneficial supports for international students which would indirectly bring economic benefits for the host universities and countries.

In summary, international students have made a great contribution to Australia culturally, socially and economically. Thus, it is important for the host country, especially policy makers, educators and socialists to understand how international students live in Australia so as to find better ways to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of international students.

1.3 Research aim and objectives

On the basis of the research background and with the need of improving the quality of life of international students in Australia, this study is conducted with an aim to

investigate the health and wellbeing of international tertiary students in Tasmania, Australia. In order to achieve the research aim, five research objectives are developed accordingly. A research objective is a “more specific description of what the various stages and/or components of the research being designed to achieve” (Bruce, Pope, & Stanistreet, 2008, p. 132). It is believed that by fulfilling the five research objectives, the research aim will be achieved. The five research objectives are as the following:

Research Objective 1: to identify the different kinds of problems in relation to health and wellbeing of the international students in the Tasmanian tertiary educational context;

Research Objective 2: to examine how the demographic factors of these students (e.g., age, gender, English language proficiency, length of stay in Tasmania) influence their views and attitudes of health and wellbeing;

Research Objective 3: to identify different coping strategies used by these students in dealing with health and wellbeing;

Research Objective 4: to examine the significance of social support that is given to international students in regarding to health and wellbeing in the Tasmanian tertiary education context; and

Research Objective 5: to provide some suggestions and advices to international students, university academics and administrators, and social groups for enhancing the health and wellbeing of the international tertiary students in Tasmania.

1.4 Overview of the research methodology

A mixed research approach is utilised in this project to fulfil the research objectives as well as the research aim. The study not only intends to measure the degree of these students’ health and wellbeing and identify the influential factors, but also aims to provide an understanding of these students’ perceptions and insights in relation to their health and wellbeing. Hence, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used in the study. The selection of the mixed approach

was made on the belief that traditional mono-method research: either quantitative or qualitative research approach is not able to address the research problem sufficiently. The combination of both research approaches, however, can provide “a more complete picture by noting trends and generalizations as well as in-depth knowledge of participants’ perspectives” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, p. 35).

A concurrent triangulation research method is selected to arrange research procedures or steps in this study. As one of the most common mixed research method, concurrent triangulation is defined as “a one-phase design in which researchers implement the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe and with equal weight” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, pp. 63-64). In this case, the quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed concurrently but separately, and results from both sets of data are integrated during the interpretation and discussion phase.

The advantages of the research method are recognized as a justification of selection of the method for this study. Firstly, the research method is a one-phase research design, in which both types of data are collected during one phase at roughly the same time and thus it is an more efficient design as compared to the sequential research design (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Secondly, the method is able to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method by means of triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative methods in one project (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Lastly, the method is advantageous to drawing valid and well-substantiated conclusions about a single phenomenon by means of comparisons and complementation of quantitative and qualitative results (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

As this study used concurrent triangulation strategy, two stages of data collection are apparent. Stage I (quantitative data collection) and stage II (qualitative data collection) are conducted within the same period. In this project, quantitative data are collected to fulfil research objectives 1, 2, and 3, while qualitative data are gathered to address research objectives 1, 3, 4, and 5.

1.5 Ethics considerations

This study was approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Reference Number: H10957) and conducted according to the relevant regulations and policies.

In this study, international students at University of Tasmania (UTAS) are the target participants and they are identifiable by the membership of a cultural, ethnic or minority group. In order to minimise possible risks for them, considerations are given to protect their rights and beliefs. Their perceptions and customs are well respected as well. Also, the researcher ensured that there was no discrimination on the grounds of race, religious or spiritual beliefs.

Besides, some private and personal information is involved in this project, such as marital status, physical health status, psychological problems and health behaviours, which might cause the participants to recall unpleasant memories leading to potential harms, discomforts, or psychological problems, including anger, anxiety and depression. Therefore, counselling services are arranged in advance to address any discomforts or distresses that are caused to affected participants. The participants are informed about all possible risks in the information sheets prior to data collection.

1.6 Limitations of the research

Potential objective factors could be claimed to compromise the validity of analysis and findings. This study is no exception. Some limitations of this research have been recognised:

One of the potential limitations is that the study was conducted in one particular Australian university because an ethical approval was only obtained from this university. Also, the study just focused on international tertiary students and students at other educational levels or institutes, such as primary school, secondary school or other vocational schools were excluded out of the scope of the study.

Therefore, the generalization of the results from this sample to the total population of international students attending school in Australia was limited.

Besides, due to time and financial constraints, the study was conducted cross-sectionally rather than longitudinally. Hence, the resulting understanding of the acculturation process was limited and causal relationships among variables could not be determined.

The sample size of the staff cohort (n=5) who participated in the semi-structured interviews would be one of the limitations because it might not be an optimum number of participants what would enable the qualitative research to aim for an “ideally” sized sample. Rather, the sample size should be adequate to allow the researcher to achieve the aims of the research, because “sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what’s at stake, what will be useful and what will be credible” (Patton, 2002, p. 244). The sample included academics and administrators who have frequent and extensive contacts with international students. Their perceptions and experiences can potentially contribute in-depth information to the study. Hence, the sample for the staff’s qualitative data set is considered to be appropriate to explore their perceptions of international students’ health and wellbeing statuses.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

Apart from this introduction chapter, this thesis contains another six chapters as follows:

Chapter 2 - Literature review: The chapter reviews relevant literature and existing research works in relation to the research field. The definitions of “health” and “international students” in the literature are reviewed initially. Subsequently, relevant theories in the theoretical domain of intercultural contacts including concept of culture shock, the acculturation theory and the Affect-Behaviour-Cognition (ABC) theoretical framework are examined to establish a theoretical foundation for this study. Literature on three important aspects related to the research objectives including adjustment problems, coping strategies, and social

support were also reviewed in this chapter. Lastly, the research gaps are discovered and clarified in the final part of this chapter.

Chapter 3 - Methodology: methodology utilized in this study is introduced in detail in this chapter. It provides the rationale for the selection of mixed research approach, and explains why the concurrent triangulation strategy is the most suitable research paradigm for this project. The chapter also describes the detailed procedures of data collection, including the participant recruitment, the instruments development and the pilot study.

Chapter 4 - Quantitative data analysis: This chapter describes the analysis process of quantitative data which gathered by the questionnaire. Responses rate and participants' demographic profiles are presented at the beginning of this chapter. It is followed by a presentation of descriptive statistics of participants' responses, including frequencies, percentages, and medians. Subsequently, inferential statistics analyses are conducted to found out influential factors which are significantly associated to the participants' health and wellbeing. All of findings are presented in forms of tables and figures.

Chapter 5 - Qualitative data analysis: The chapter explains the detailed analysis procedures of qualitative data which collected by semi-structured interviews. The participants' profiles are presented at the beginning of the chapter. It is followed by an introduction of the analysis technique – thematic analysis utilized in the data analysis in this study. A total of 7 themes are emerged from the set of data and the results are presented in detail in this chapter.

Chapter 6 – Discussion: This chapter discusses the results emerging from both the quantitative and qualitative analysis and provides a complete and comprehensive account for the international students' health and wellbeing at UTAS. These findings are also examined in the light of the literature reviewed. Findings are discussed and presented in the order of the five research objectives.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion: this chapter provides an overview of the entire research journey. Findings are summarized responding to the five research objectives. On the

basis of these findings, the study also provides recommendations and implications to the current of prospective international students, Australian academics, university administrative services, and local communities. A few suggestions for further research are also presented in this chapter.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has given an introduction of the whole research project. The research background was provided initially with a brief introduction of global international education market and a simplified discussion of relevant issues in relations to health and wellbeing of international students. It was followed an introduction the research aim and objectives and an overview of the research methodology utilized in this study. The significances of this study and its limitations were also presented in this chapter touching on the discussions of some important ethical considerations. The following chapter will provide an in-depth review the literature and the existing research works to establish a solid theoretical foundation and reference for this study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Literature review is an explicit, systematic and reproducible method for identifying, synthesising and evaluating the existing body of completed and recorded works produced by scholars, researchers and practitioners (Creswell, 2003; Fink, 2009). As an integral part of the entire research procedure, it plays an important role in almost every research step. In the initial stages, it establishes the theoretical root for the study, develops the research methodology, and later on enhances and consolidates the knowledge base and integrates the findings with the existing body of knowledge (Kumar, 2005). All these reasons may be the foundation for writing a literature review into a study (Creswell, 2003).

In this study, literature relevant to the research aim and objectives was reviewed. The study aims to investigate the international students' health and wellbeing. The definitions of "health" and "international students" in the literature were reviewed initially. Subsequently, relevant theories in the theoretical domain of intercultural contact including concept of culture shock, the acculturation theory and the Affect-Behaviour-Cognition (ABC) theoretical framework were examined to establish a theoretical foundation for this study. Literature on three important aspects relevant to the research objectives including adjustment problems, coping strategies, and social support were reviewed. General living adjustment, academic adjustment, social-cultural adjustment, and personal psychological adjustment are the four salient adjustment problems identified as factors influencing the international students' health and wellbeing. The reviewed literature also groups coping strategies into problems-focused coping and emotional-focused coping. Besides, family, friends, and university are three main sources of social support for international students to help them cope with difficulties and enhance their health and wellbeing.

2.2 The concepts of health

Health is an important concept in our daily life and everybody has their own understanding of health. However, there had been no unified explanations in the scholastic field until World Health Organisation gave an official definition which is extensively recognised in present day. The definition is that “health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity” (WHO, 1948, p. 1). There are two advantages of this definition. One merit is breaking the tradition thinking that health is limited to the physical domain and expanding the concept of health to include psychological and social dimensions. Traditionally, physical health was the entire meaning of health. Most scholars explained health only from the physical perspective. For example, Strange (1864) concluded that:

Health are compounded and made up of the good qualities of several distinct individuals: the fine chest and perfect wind of one, the powerful circulation and good animal spirits of a second, the digestion of a third, which refuses nothing, and the muscular and locomotive power of another, which seems never to lessen or tire. If to these we add the ability to resist the vicissitudes of weather, the effects of bad sanitary arrangements, and of epidemical influences, we shall have our perfect ideal, our abstraction-health (p. 2).

The WHO definition has widened the traditional meanings and added new determinants to the concept of health – mental and social determinants, which make health more comprehensive and appropriate. Another advantage of the WHO definition is that the absence of disease and infirmity is inadequate to qualify health. For a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of the WHO statement, it is important to examine two related concepts: disease and illness. As Harper, Lambert and Holman (1994) argue, the two concepts, to some extent, are overlapping concepts, but there are also subtle differences between them. They further explain that disease usually emphasises some symptoms that can be diagnosed, whereas illness emphasises a lack of physical, psychological or social

wellbeing. Therefore, the presence of disease does not necessarily mean illness. For example, a well- cared patient with a certain disease who is supported by his or her family and friends is not ill. It is worth noting that disease is probably one of the causes of illness but not the only source. Social factors such as a new living environment, loss of employment and emotional factors such as death of a family member or a friend may lead to illness. Illness has various manifestations. Physical illness is usually exemplified by pain, nausea or weakness; emotional illness is characterised by depression, anxiety, agitation or changes in mood; and social illness is manifested by difficulties to establish, maintain and develop social contacts (Harper, et al., 1994).

Although the WHO definition has broadened the concept of health, many scholars question its effectiveness and accuracy. According to Callahan (1973), there are roughly two objections. One objection is that “health”, just as “peace”, “happiness” “justice” and other systematically ambiguous concepts, is too general and abstract to be specified or defined. Another is about the inappropriate or inadequate aspects dealt with in the definition. Most of the objections fall in the latter category. For example, Saracci (1997) argued that the “state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing” relates much more closely to happiness than to health, and he emphasised “happiness” and “health” are two words that denote distinct life experiences. “Social wellbeing” cannot be categorised into the “health” domain since there is no evidence that a human being can obtain happiness by medical or other scientific means (Callahan, 1973). Saracci (1997) also argued that health is a universal and positive human right that can be required by societal action to ensure that they effectively and fully materialise, whereas happiness is strictly subjective achievement and appreciation which is impossible to be acquired by societal action. Therefore, he came up with a revised view – “health is a condition of wellbeing free of disease or infirmity and a basic and universal human right” (p. 1410).

Although there are always arguments over what definition is most appropriate, the WHO definition is most widely used.

2.3 The concept of sojourner and international students

International students belong to one type of “sojourner”. According to Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001), a sojourn is defined as a temporary stay at a new place. Although people have sojourned long in the past, systematic research has not been done for this group of travellers until 70 years ago. Park (1928) coined a term “the marginal man” to describe this special group of people in society who encounter problems caught between two cultural systems, not belonging to or fully accepted by the host culture. Later, Simmel (1950) used another term “the stranger” to name those who come from another place and assume or are assigned a particular social position. Those strangers are part of the social system but are not closely attached to it. Based on these previous studies, Siu proposed a new name – “the sojourner” – and gave it a definition as “a type of stranger who spends many years of his lifetime in a foreign country without being assimilated by it” (1952, p. 34). Later, Hamann defined sojourners “as a product of the vicissitudes of the locale where they are living and/or of their own will, are not deeply attached to that place and could readily move or be dislocated” (2001, p. 37). As an extensive concept, sojourners include many types: colonists, business people, diplomats, international students, the armed forces, voluntary workers, missionaries, international journalists and all sorts of migrant groups (Furnham & Bochner, 1986).

Sojourners have experienced a series of adjustments to the new environment. Although these social adjustments and responses of the sojourners might vary in detail according to particular situations, there are still some general characteristics which sojourners have in common (Siu, 1952).

Sojourners normally have their own aims and purposes for going abroad. For example, the purpose of business people is to chase the greatest commercial interest; missionary workers want to fulfil their religious mission; Peace Corp volunteers hope to stop violence and keep peace in a particular region. Therefore, Siu concluded that “there is ... something common to all of them [sojourners]; the intrinsic purpose of the sojourn is to do a job and do it in the shortest possible time” (1952, p. 35). He also stated that it is the “job” that makes the activities of the

sojourn in society more symbiotic than social, because the public seldom think of him or her other than in relation to his or her job. Therefore, the sojourner, in the public's eyes, is a person who performs a function rather than a person with a social status. In addition, he noted that whatever job he does, it is something foreign to the natives. It is the "alien" element of the job.

The second common characteristic of sojourners is the "in-group tendency". Due to the same cultural background and/or common interests, sojourners tend to establish relationships with people of their own ethnic group or background. They tend to create a home away from home to maintain their home culture. At this "home beyond home", they can share with their "co-national" friends about their hope, pride, prejudices and dilemmas, etc. (Siu, 1952). Co-nationals are people who are from the same country and share the same ethnical and cultural background.

Although the sojourners live abroad, they would never lose their ties with their homeland. When conditions permit, they would take a trip back home for a visit. "The return trip is the result of a social expectation of members of his primary group as much as of his individual effort" (Siu, 1952, p. 39). Despite the home visiting trips, the sojourners have to return to their host countries in an expectable time frame since there are unaccomplished jobs abroad. Sometimes, they never make their return trips for reasons such as financial problems, business commitments, political unrests, etc., but it is by no means a proof that they are not sojourners. They keep the home ties by means of writing letters, sending and receiving emails, calling home or exchanging gifts. Therefore, Siu (1952) proposed that a third characteristics of a sojourner is the "movement back and forth". "The movement is characterised by ethnocentrism in the form of social isolation abroad and social expectation and status at home" (Siu, 1952, p. 39). Smith (1994) shared a similar point of view with Siu and he stated that sojourners' "life worlds are neither 'here' nor 'there' but at once *both* 'here' and 'there'" (Smith, 1994).

International students belong to one type of sojourners. According to Paige (1990), international students are defined as individuals who temporarily live in a host country rather than their home country in order to participate in international

education as students. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation- Institute for Statistics (2009) provide a more insightful definition. In its definition, international students are viewed as “international mobile students”, which is characterised by the following three criteria:

Permanent residence: Students can be considered to be mobile students if they are not permanent residents of the host country in which they pursue their studies.

Prior education: Students can be considered to be mobile students if they obtained the entry qualification to their current level of study in another country. Prior education refers typically to upper secondary education for students enrolled in tertiary programs.

Citizenship: Students can be considered to be mobile students if they are not citizens of the host country in which they pursue their studies (p. 36)

These students are normally young, well educated, highly motivated and adaptable (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). As a type of sojourners, international students on the one hand share the same characteristics with other types of sojourners but on the other hand possess their own distinctive features.

According to the literature (Bochner, 1973; Klineberg & Hull, 1979), the job or task that drives the international students to study abroad is to obtain a degree or diploma and gain academic or professional experiences. As Furnham and Bochner (1986) noted, although a few international students cited “culture learning” and “personal development” as their main objectives for studying abroad, an overwhelming majority of overseas students were primarily concerned with gaining a degree and/or obtaining professional training and experiences. Hence, apart from the general problems that other types of sojourners had to encounter, international students had to face specific difficulties, such as academic difficulties during their sojourn.

The in-group tendency of international students is observed in Bochner's (1977) co-national friendship study. He categorised the international students' friendship network into three patterns: monocultural, bicultural and multicultural. Co-national friendship belongs to the monocultural network, which provides informational and emotional support to foreign students. Students from the same nation are able to offer useful resources and share practical strategies for coping with stress in the new environment. Besides, the co-national friends' support is able to help international students reduce depression and overcome loneliness (Adelman, 1988). It is the co-national friends rather than local friends that affect the international students' life satisfaction (Coates, 2004).

As a type of sojourners, international students also maintain their ties with their home country in a variety of ways including visiting trips, calling home, sending emails or instant messages. Besides, seeking and receiving family support is one of the important ways to keep an intimate contact with their home country. As previous studies (Ward & Masgoret, 2004; Williams, 2007) noted, family support is one of the essential sources which play a reliable and irreplaceable role in supporting international students.

2.4 Theoretical framework of intercultural contact

2.4.1 The concept of "culture shock"

The term "culture shock" was first proposed by Oberg in a short descriptive article. Oberg argued that "culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (1960, p. 142). According to Oberg, culture shock is considered as an occupational disease experienced by people who suddenly transferred abroad. This has its own symptoms, cause and cure like most diseases. Oberg's theory was supported by a few scholars. For example, Kenneth (1971) noted that culture shock is a common phenomenon for the sojourners, and there is a decrease in socio-personal adjustment with behavioural disorders or neurotic symptoms which occur when a person is undergoing a stressful situation. Adler also agreed that "culture shock is

primarily a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture, to new cultural stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences" (1975, p. 13). Furthermore, Taft (1977) proposed six aspects of culture shock, which seem to be the best consensus statement.

1. Strain due to the effort required to make necessary psychological adaptations;
2. A sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in regard to friends, status, profession and possessions;
3. Being rejected by and/or rejecting members of the new culture;
4. Confusion in role, role expectations, values, feelings and self-identity;
5. Surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after becoming aware of cultural differences; and
6. Feelings of impotence due to not being able to cope with the new environment (pp. 140-142).

Oberg (1960) further pointed out that there are four discerning stages in the process where a sojourner transits from culture shock to satisfactory adjustment. The first stage is the *honeymoon* stage, which might last from a few days to weeks even and a few months depending on the circumstances of the individuals. In this stage, the sojourner usually is fascinated by the new environment around him or her. But if the foreign visitor remains abroad, he or she will have to face and overcome real problems in life, such as language, accommodation, transportation, shopping, etc. At this point, the second stage begins. The sojourner could feel frustrated, anxious and angry. The third stage is *recovery*, which is a process of crisis resolution and culture learning, and then the sojourner steps into the last stage of complete *full recovery*, reflecting enjoyment of and adaptation to the new environment. Other scholars also look at the entire process in similar ways as

Oberg's, although different terms are adopted. For example, Richardson (1974) named the four stages as *elation, depression, recovery* and *acculturation*. Adler (1975) divided the process into five stages: *contact, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy* and *independence*.

2.4.2 The acculturation theory

Since the introduction of the term culture shock, a great number of studies internationally have emerged. A salient concept of acculturative stress proposed by Berry (1970) was introduced as an alternative to the term culture shock. Culture shock was re-defined by Zhang and Berry (Zheng & Berry, 1991) as

A form of stress in which the stressors are identified as having their source in the process of acculturation, there is often a particular set of stress behaviours, which occur during acculturation, such as lowered mental health status (specially anxiety and depression), feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptom level, and identity confusion. (p. 453)

Berry (1997, 2006) gave two reasons for replacing *culture shock* with *acculturative stress*. First, the notion of *shock* tends to be negative, while *stress* may have both positive and negative aspects. Thus, the term stress better matches the concept of acculturation as cultural adjustment is a process comprising both positive and negative experiences. Furthermore, there is no psychological or cultural theory behind the term shock, while stress has a developed theoretical frame. Secondly, as cultural adaptation is a process of interactions between two cultures, acculturation is a more appropriate term, while culture is a concept which has a mono context.

In fact, the item acculturative stress was developed based on the concept of acculturation, which has been a subject of study for many years. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) defined acculturation as,

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous

first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. (p. 149)

This definition frames acculturation as a group-level phenomenon. However, other studies (Berry, 1970; Furnham & Bochner, 1986) argued that acculturation should be discussed at an individual level because acculturation is a change in the psychology of the individual. They claimed that even if general changes may be profound in the group, the individuals' changes might vary greatly in degree as they participate in these collective changes. Based on this perspective, Arends-Toth and Vijver offered another definition of acculturation: "changes that an individual experiences as a result of contact with one or more other cultures and of the participation in the ensuing process of change that one's cultural or ethnic group is undergoing" (2006, p. 34).

Dimensions or categories of acculturation have been further examined by more and more scholars in intercultural studies. Two models have emerged in the many studies on acculturation. One is the bi-dimensional model (Ryder, Alden, & Paulbus, 2000; Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006; Tadamor & Tetlock, 2006), which claims that acculturation is presented in a form of the dimensional model, which is an interlaced process of the receiving-culture acquisition and a heritage-culture retention. Thus, those who have been experiencing cultural transition are susceptible to take various pressures from either the receiving cultural context or the heritage cultural community, or both.

Based on the bi-dimensional model, another well-known model of acculturation developed is Berry's acculturation strategies. There are two underlying questions for this conceptual framework: "Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics? Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with the larger society?" (Berry, 1997, p. 10).

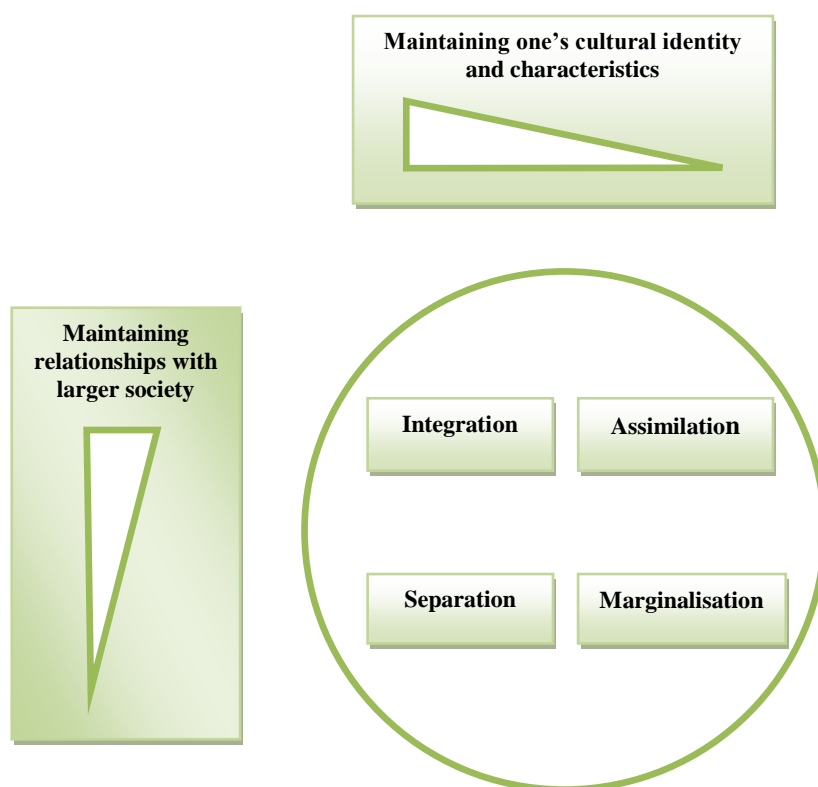


Figure 2.1. Berry's acculturative strategies: Integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation (Berry, 1997)

The above figure is a representation of Berry's acculturative strategies. Four kinds of acculturative strategies are defined according to how a non-dominant group or an individual responds to the two underlying questions. When there is an interest in both maintaining their own cultural identity and having interactions with the host society, *integration* is the strategy to be adopted. However, when the non-dominant group or individual is inclined to build intensive and extensive interaction with the local society without any interests in maintaining their own cultural heritage, *assimilation* is the strategy. In contrast, if the group or the individual does not want to have any interaction with the local society but is highly interested in maintaining their original culture, *separation* is defined. Lastly, when there is no possibility or interest in maintaining the original culture maintenance or in building a relationship with the local community, *marginalisation* is the defined strategy.

Within Berry's acculturative strategies, integration represents a bi-dimensional model. It can be regarded as an ideal outcome of acculturation. Integration can be successfully pursued by both the non-dominant groups which have keen interests in

interacting with the larger society and the dominant society which is open and inclusive to embrace multicultural diversity and meet the needs of all ethnic groups living together.

Although the acculturation theory has inspired a large number of studies on intercultural contacts, there are two main questions about the theory. First, the four acculturative strategies are too generalised in explaining a diverse range of intercultural contact strategies (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). Second, the validity of marginalisation has been questioned as it is hard to understand how a non-dominant group's cultural identity develops without interacting with either their own cultural heritage or the receiving culture (Rudmin, 2003).

2.4.3 The Affect-Behaviour-Cognition (ABC) framework

The culture shock theory has led to a great deal of academic research internationally. Barry's acculturation theory is one of the prominent theoretical frameworks which have been reviewed in the last section. This section presents another important theoretical framework: Affect-Behaviour-Cognition (ABC). The theoretical framework has been developed on the basis of Berry's acculturation theory and is more comprehensive as it embraces three salient concepts: *cultural learning*, *stress and coping*, and *social identification* and the three concepts focus respectively on *behaviour*, *affect* and *cognition*. The theoretical framework collaboratively provides a more comprehensive insight into people's cultural adaptation to a new environment.

2.4.3.1 Culture learning (behaviour)

The "culture learning" concept originated from social psychology, which emphasises the behavioural aspect of intercultural contact and regards social interaction as a mutually organised and skilled behavioural performance. It also argues that the conflicts or stress caused by intercultural contact are largely due to the sojourner lacking the social skills of the new society (Argyle, 1969). Cultural learning was strongly advocated by Furnham and Bochner's (1986) and it has become a theoretic basis for cultural training models.

Having general knowledge about the host culture and being competent in intercultural communication are two important aspects of culture learning. Acquiring cultural knowledge is “the process of seeking and obtaining a sound educational foundation about diverse cultural and ethnic groups” (Campinha-Bacote, 2002, p. 182). Having intercultural communication competence requires the sojourner to have knowledge of both his/her own national and host-national communication patterns, rules and conventions that regulate interpersonal communication. It also includes how people send and receive information, express their emotion, and influence each other by verbal and non-verbal communication (Ward, et al., 2001). The culture learning theory involves and demands a great deal of cultural knowledge and social skills of the receiving society which are acquired in the new sociocultural context. Therefore, it leads to practical guidelines for preparation, orientation and behavioural social skills training (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008).

2.4.3.2 Stress and coping (affect)

While “culture learning” focuses on the behavioural component of intercultural contact, the “stress and coping” emphasises the affective aspect which examines the sojourners’ psychological wellbeing and satisfaction in the process of intercultural transition.

Theoretically originated from Holmes and Rahe’s (1967) life events concept and Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) stress, appraisal and coping theory, the stress and coping concept holds a view that stress is inherently caused by life changes in the process of cross-cultural transitions and thus a sojourner needs to select or develop effective strategies and tactics to cope with the stress (Zhou, et al., 2008). Both stress and coping strategies correlate with the characteristics of the situation and the characteristics of the individual, and in turn, affect the outcome of adjustment (Berry, 1997). At societal level, variables such as the political context, economic situation, attitudes towards ethnic out-groups and social support in both the society of origin and the society of settlement all affect the psychological adjustment of the non-dominants in the host country. At individual level, the individual’s

demographics, expectations, cultural distance, personality, length of stay, and acculturation strategies are regarded as influential factors which are related to their psychological wellbeing in the process of transition. The concept of “stress and coping” can be implicated in training people to develop stress-management skills (Ward, et al., 2001).

2.4.3.3 Social identification (cognition)

The “social identification” concept is regarded as the cognitive aspect of intercultural contact. The concept is originally based on theories of social cognition and social identity (Deaux, 1996) which focuses on examining the ways in which people ethnically and culturally identify themselves, including how they perceive themselves and others as well as how they establish relations with their own ethnic groups (in-groups) and other ethnic groups (out-groups). Intercultural contact and/or cultural transition are highly likely to affect the sojourner’s perception of his/her cultural identity and relations with the in-groups and out-groups. Two major conceptual approaches have been used to examine issues associated with social identification: acculturation and identity, and the social identity theory.

2.4.3.3.1 Acculturation and identity

The first conceptual approach is “acculturation and identity”. In relation to Berry’s acculturation theory, the approach mainly examines the sojourners’ identity changes in the process of intercultural contact. Those who are from countries with a relatively homogeneous culture or a cultural distance far away from the host country would encounter more challenges in processing and categorising their identity.

Berry’s four acculturation strategies form a theoretical base for categorising the various identification processes encountered by the sojourners. Assimilation describes a state that a sojourner identifies entirely with the host culture and at the same time completely gives up his/her own original identity. Contrary to assimilation, separation refers to a situation in which a sojourner treasures highly his/her own heritage culture and does not identify with the host culture. Integration

implies that an individual considers both the home and host cultures equally important in his identification. Marginalisation means that the individual sees himself/herself low in both home and host culture identification. Furthermore, identity correlates with a diversity of variables, including individual characteristics (gender, age and education); home society characteristics (migration motivation and cultural similarity); and host society's characteristics (prejudice and discrimination; monoculturalism or multiculturalism).

2.4.3.3.2 Social identity theory

The "social identity theory" (Tajfel, 1981) is another conceptual approach which examines how a group affects an individual's identity. It has been one of the most frequently referenced conceptual approaches for exploring identity and intergroup relations in sojourners. What it concerns is the relationship between (1) self-esteem and (2) social categorisation and social comparison. Social identification relies on how social categorisation and social comparison affect social identification. Favourable comparisons are positively correlated with self-esteem. A relationship between cultural identity and self-esteem only occurs when an individual consciously perceives his/her own culture as a salient feature of his/her identity. Also, intergroup bias is an important issue of social identification (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Ward, et al., 2001). A few studies (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) have found that in-group favouritism and out-group derogation are common, and the latter is more likely to occur when in-group identity is threatened. Furthermore, the approach explores the minorities' responses to discriminations caused by the majorities' negative social comparison. The typical responses to discrimination are individual mobility, social creativity and social competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

In summary, the Affect-Behaviour-Cognition theoretical framework sheds light on three important aspects of intercultural contact which form a comprehensive conceptual framework of cultural adaptation (Zhou, et al., 2008) .

2.5 Adjustment problems

Section 2.3 has provided a definition of the population group – international students and its distinguishing characteristics. This section reviews the literature regarding potential health risks for international students.

Sojourners are a particularly vulnerable population group in terms of health. They are susceptible to physical diseases and psychological problems due to linguistic, cultural and religious differences or barriers caused by environmental transition (Grondin, 2005). Cushner and Karim (2004) defined sojourn experience as “a significant transitional event that brings with it a considerable amount of accompanying stress, involving both confrontation and adaptation to unfamiliar physical and psychological experiences and changes”(p. 292). Research has found that human body usually has internal defensive reactions to unfamiliar external environments, such as physical tension, perspiration, blushing, an increase in body temperature, blood pressure, and heart and pulse rates (Axelson, 1993). When exposed to excessive and continuous stressful situations, people would be susceptible to chronic somatic complaints such as dysfunctions in pituitary-adrenal activities, impairment of immune systems, mass discharges of the sympathetic nervous systems and so on (Khoo, Abu-Rasain, & Hornby, 1994; Winkelman, 1994). In terms of psychosocial health, facing and adjusting to a strange environment, a sojourner usually experiences fear of the unknown, anxiety about the future and homesickness. Therefore, the incidence rate of depression and anxiety in the sojourner population is reportedly higher than the local population (Carballo, Divino, & Zeric, 1998).

As a type of sojourners, international students share common characteristics with other types of sojourners. In fact, the health and wellbeing of international students has been studied for many years. In the early period of research, Ward (1967) used the term “foreign student syndrome” to describe the international students’ unique characteristics of their state of health including symptoms of vagueness, nonspecific physical complaints, passive interaction style and an unkempt appearance. Zwingman (1978) used a new term “uprooting disorder” to illustrate the adjustment

experiences of international students , which could cause “disorientation, nostalgic-depressive reactions, feelings of isolation, alienation, and powerlessness” (p. 353). In subsequent studies, psychological problems associated with adjustment have been frequently investigated. In a retrospective study on the psychiatric morbidity rates in Yugoslavia, Janca and Helzer (1992) found that from hospital records of local and international students between 1956 and 1980, 67% of international students were diagnosed as having paranoid delusions, 62% of them suffered depression and 52% had anxious symptoms. Other literature (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Thomas & Althen, 1989) also showed that depression, nostalgia, alienation, irritability, disorientation, neuroticism, paranoid feelings and a sense of hopelessness, isolation and loneliness are typical psychological symptoms associated with the health of international students. In addition, physiological symptoms caused by acculturative stress have been considerably identified in literature (Mori, 2000; Thomas & Althen, 1989). It is not unusual to find international students suffering from a persistent lack or loss of sleep and appetite, low energy and stamina levels, gastrointestinal problems and headaches.

Consequently, there are adequate evidences supporting that international students are at a high risk of acquiring physical and psychological problems in the process of adjustment to the new environment (Mori, 2000; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994; Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). In addition to identifying the symptoms, many studies have also examined what kinds of factors or health risks impact the international students’ physical health and psychological wellbeing. Based on previous literature (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Porter, 1993; Tseng & Newton, 2002), there are four major categories of adjustment problems encountered by international students: general living adjustment, academic adjustment, social-cultural adjustment, personal psychological adjustment.

2.5.1 General living adjustment

This category includes some basic living problems encountered by international students in their daily life. They probably are not big problems in their home countries. In a completely new environment, however, they could become

overwhelming to affect international students' physical health and psychological wellbeing. The following adjustment problems are included in this category.

2.5.1.1 Accommodation

This section discusses the relationship between the built environment and the health of the individual in the environment. The built environment is defined as the human-made features of communities, such as housing, public facilities, land-use patterns and the transportation system (Frank, Engelke, & Schmid, 2003; Frumkin, Frank, & Jackson, 2004). There is a great deal of evidences that the built environment promotes or obstructs physical health and psychological wellbeing (Farhang & Bhatia, 2005). In the comprehensive domain of a built environment, housing (accommodation) and transportation are mentioned in the literature as the two most dominant health risks affecting international students.

Accommodation is the most frequently mentioned university service which international students specify using (Rosenthal, Russell, & Thomson, 2006). The quality of accommodation directly influences the international students' health and wellbeing. In Ward and Masgoret's (2004) study conducted in New Zealand, the international students mainly lived in rental accommodation (43%) or lodged in home-stays (42%), a small percentage stayed in hostels (7%), their own homes (3%) or homes of relatives (4%). The results showed that students who lived in their own home or that of relatives were most satisfied with their accommodation; and students who lodged in home stays were more satisfied than those who lived in rental accommodation and student hostels. Similarly, Rosenthal et al. (2006) found that students who stayed with their family members or partners were most satisfied with their living arrangements, while those living with others were the least satisfied. Most importantly, the research found that students with the highest level of satisfaction with their accommodation had significantly lower levels of stress, depression and anxiety, than those who had little satisfaction.

Besides, scarcity of affordable housing is one of the accommodation related difficulties international students have to face. According to Khawaja and Dempsey (2007), there is a scarcity of affordable housing for international students in

Australia. Along with the steady growth in numbers of international students, housing rental prices are increasing. Therefore, rising costs and dissatisfaction toward accommodation may increase international students' financial and psychological stress (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2007).

2.5.1.2 Transportation

Apart from accommodation, transportation is another important factor that influences the international students' quality of life in an unfamiliar environment. Accessibility and quality of service are two criteria related to their evaluation of transportation. In Williams's (2007) study, the absence of adequate public transportation or access to a car was problematic for some Asian students as it would result in a dependency on others and cause them great inconvenience. Also, safety, affordability and public transit service are three factors that relate to public transport' service (Benjamin, 2009; Dora & Phillips, 2000; Farhang & Bhatia, 2005). Farhang and Bhatia (2005) stated that high transportation costs, fear of violence, unreliability of schedules, lengthy transit-routes with multiple transfers and long waiting times can cause stress, which has a direct relationship to physical and mental health outcomes, such as tiredness, depression and anxiety.

2.5.1.3 Financial problem

Adequate finances are essential to the international students for the acquisition of education, food and shelter (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2008). The general perception that most international students are wealthy is, in fact, not true (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986). Literature review has found that financial concerns are commonly identified as one of the greatest sources of stress for international students (Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000; Mullins, Quintrell, & Hancock, 1995b). Galloway and Jenkins's (2005) study also indicated that financial aid is the most significant adjustment problem for international students. Increasing tuition fees and living expenses are main sources of financial stress (Chen, 1999). In addition, little or no access to welfare benefits, scholarships and loans, and the considerable responsibility of paying out-of-state tuition may increase the international students' financial pressure (Lin & Yi, 1997). Rosenthal et al. (2006) conducted comprehensive research and elaborated more

issues in this field. They found that family resource was the most common source (84.6%) of financial support for international students. Other sources included paid work (28%), their own savings (20.4%) and scholarships (20%). Students who were mainly supported by family finance were less worried about money than those students who were supported by other sources. The authors also found that worrying about finances correlated significantly to the international students' level of depression, stress and anxiety.

2.5.2 Academic adjustment

One of the main purposes of an international student studying in an Australian university is to pursue further study and gain a degree, and most international students have excessive concerns about and placing extreme demands on themselves in relation to the attainment of academic excellence (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2007, 2008). Therefore, academic-related problems are of major concern to international students (Hashim & Zhiliang, 2003; Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003). These have a great influence upon their physical and psychological wellbeing. For an international student, the psychological adjustment to the new learning situation is as difficult as to the new environment (Davis, 1999). A review of literature (Arthur, 2004; Liu, 2001; Mori, 2000) indicated that there are four major problems encountered by international students in terms of academic adjustment:

2.5.2.1 Language barriers

Language barriers are likely to be the most prevalent and significant problem for overseas students (Mori, 2000), especially for those who had little practice in or exposure to English in their home countries (Liu, 2001). According to Rosenthal et al. 's (2006) research, in which 85% of the participants were from Asian countries, 24% of the international students reported that they had difficulties in English writing and 22% in oral English. Ward and Masgore's (2004) study similarly reported that making oral presentations was the greatest academic difficulty that international students faced. The other top four difficulties were taking tests or examinations, expressing themselves in English, expressing opinions to the teachers and in writing assignments.

Language difficulty has a direct adverse effect on the academic performance of international students (Mori, 2000). Inadequate English language skills are disadvantageous to international students (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2007) because it can decrease the students' ability to understand lectures, to take notes and to complete assignments and tests (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986). Some international students have to spend extra time to read their textbooks, and they also find it difficult to articulate their knowledge in essays or research papers because of their limited vocabulary (Lin & Yi, 1997). Also, the lack of language proficiency is obstructive when communicating with other students and teachers in classes and make them feel reluctant to participate in class discussions (Lin & Yi, 1997). Besides, international students may also have difficulty in adjusting to the unintelligible accents and understanding different styles of speech (Karim, 2010; Kell & Vogl, 2007; Uba, 1994).

These difficulties caused by inadequate language proficiency could result in academic failure, which is a main reason causing shame and depression, particularly for those international students from cultures in which "face" is integral to identity (Chen, 1999). Therefore, English language inadequacy is a significant predictor of acculturative stress (Yeh & Inose, 2003) and has deleterious consequences to the psychological wellbeing of international students (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993a; Yang & Clum, 1994).

2.5.2.2 Unfamiliar tertiary educational Style

An unfamiliar educational system is one of the greatest adjustment difficulties for many international students. When the learning and teaching styles in the host country conflict with their previous educational experiences, it often takes a long time for international students to adapt to their new academic environment, and the process of academic adjustment is directly related to their psychological wellbeing (Arthur, 2004).

Many studies on differences of educational styles can be found in the literature. Among these, the cultural dimensions of teaching and learning styles based on Hofstede's (2005) cultural differences model are highly valued although there are

recently growing criticisms of his “cultural stereotype” or “cultural determinism” of teaching and learning practices. Five cultural dimensions are identified in Hofstede’s (1986, 1991; 2005) study, namely, power distance, individualist versus collectivist, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation versus short-term orientation. According to his research, Australia is regarded as a country characterised by low power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty acceptance and short-term orientation. Its educational style, to some extent, reflects these cultural characteristics. International students, especially those from countries with different cultural characteristics may have more difficulties adjusting to the unfamiliar teaching and learning styles in Australia.

Most Asian countries, especially south eastern Asian countries, are defined as regions with distinctive cultural and educational characteristics different from Anglo-Saxon countries (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Hence, learning experiences of students from these areas have been studied by many scholars for comparison between the different educational styles (Chan, 1999; Ho, 2001; Leung, 2001; Mori, 2000). For example, as Mori (2000) noted, south eastern Asian students are typically characterised as compliant and passive, but active classroom participation is highly encouraged in most American universities, especially in tutorials. Therefore, these students tend to be quiet in classrooms and take notes to be memorised in preparation for tests and examinations (Mori, 2000). Also, these students are unaccustomed to independent learning methods, such as independent library research, creative standard essays or term papers and frequent quizzes and examinations in American universities (Mori, 2000). Besides, teachers and students’ roles in the Asian classrooms are quite different from those in classrooms in Anglo-Saxon countries. Cortazzi and Jin’s (1997) study made a comparison between Chinese and British students and found that Chinese students view the teacher as an authority, even a model, while in the eyes of British students, the teacher is a facilitator, organiser and friendly critic who promotes learner autonomy. Also, the Asian students’ role in classrooms is result-focused, learning by listening and reflection. In contrast, in the Anglo-Saxon educational system, the learners are the centre of the whole educational process and they are encouraged to engage in

independent learning, to question and to develop critical thinking. All these differences can bring about misunderstanding between the lecturers and international students. The latter could be perceived as not positive or uninterested in the contents of the lectures. From another perspective, international students may also consider local students as aggressive or lacking respect for their teachers when they question or even argue with the teachers.

2.5.2.3 Exclusiveness

International students could easily have a sense of exclusion in the unfamiliar academic environment. Apart from inadequate English language proficiency and unfamiliarity with the educational system, the curriculum content is considered as another factor that may interfere with the international students' successful adaptation to their new academic environment. As Arthur (2004) notes, the content of curriculum and materials used in the classrooms or other educational programs is derived solely from the host culture and society and lack representation of the diverse practices in other parts of the world. International students would be unable to fully engage in such activities as discussions, give valued feedback or make their own comments because they may not understand the meaning of the content provided. In such cases, they may feel they are being excluded from the classrooms, and some students even feel that they do not belong to the local academia. Ward and Masgoret (2004) examined the issue of cultural inclusiveness in academic adjustment and found that males reported more cultural inclusiveness than females.

2.5.3 Socio-cultural adjustment

In addition to the need to adjust academically to the new teaching and learning environment, international students also have to adapt socially to the local culture and society. According to Hofstede's (1991; 1997; 2005) the cultural difference model, the greater distance between the home culture and the host culture, the greater the cultural difficulties the international students will experience. Therefore, for most international students, especially those from a Non-English Speaking Background (NESB), the understanding and adapting of the Australian culture pose a

great challenge. Different living styles and contrasting traditions, values and norms can be psychologically and emotionally challenging for students studying abroad (Gu, 2009). Also, misunderstandings resulting from cultural differences severely influence their psychological and social adaptation in their sojourn lives.

Furthermore, racial discrimination is also another important factor that determines an international student's psychological wellbeing. Consequently, an international student's wellbeing in the host country is closely related to his/her successful social-cultural adjustment and acculturation. Based on the literature, there are four social-cultural adjustment risks for international students: cultural value conflicts, deficient intercultural communication competency, social involvement, and racial discrimination.

2.5.3.1 Cultural value conflicts

According to Inman, Ladany, Constantine and Morano (2001), cultural value conflicts are cognitive contradictions that are caused by differences between the values and expectations in the host culture and those of an individual's culture of origin. Values "refer to relationships among abstract categories that are characterised by strong affective components and imply a preference for a certain type of action" (Straub, Loch, Evaristo, Karahanna, & Strite, 2002, p. 64). They are basic evaluations that are used to judge objects, situations, acts and people (Okoli, 1994). Values are acquired early in life through family and community, and later through school. Once a value is acquired, it becomes integrated into the value system of the group of people. The value system of an individual is relatively stable but can change based on changes in culture and personal experiences (Straub, et al., 2002). The value emphases on characteristics of a culture are imparted to societal members, through everyday exposure to customs, scripts, norms, laws and organisational practices are shaped by and expressed in the prevailing culture. Thus, adaptation to social reality and informal socialisation are just as central to the transmission of cultural values as is formal socialisation (Schwartz, 1999).

Cultural value conflicts encountered by international students who are living in a different cultural context would negatively influence their psychological and social

wellbeing. For example, many African students from Kenyan, Nigerian, and Ghanaian cultures which emphasise communalism, harmony, collectivism and cooperation may experience cultural difficulties when interacting with white American students, who tend to value independence and self-reliance in relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Swagler & Ellis, 2003). Therefore, students who treasure a highly communal life may struggle to define themselves when they are far away from their home countries, and their sense of loneliness, isolation (Rousseau, Mekki-Berrada, & Moreau, 2001), and homesickness may be obvious in the American individualistic society that tend to disparage dependence on others (Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell, & Utsey, 2005). According to Lin and Yi (1997), Asian students are often being stereotyped as reserved, quiet and non-assertive, since Asian cultures tend to emphasise the value of harmony, respect, patience and deference. Hence, Asian students may feel uncomfortable when they interact with Americans whose cultural values include assertiveness and negotiation.

2.5.3.2 Deficient intercultural communication competency

Another factor influencing the degree to which international students adapt to the new socio-cultural environments is deficient intercultural communication competency. According to Hall (1990), “communication constitutes the core of culture and indeed of life itself”(p. 1). Based on a review of literature on intercultural communication, Six factors are identified relating to communication competency: language competency, social decentring, knowledge of the host culture, adaptation, communication effectiveness, and social integration (Arthur, 2004; Redmond & Bunyi, 1993a). Under language competency, there are three components: social linguistic competence (rules of using forms and meanings in various contexts); discourse competence (knowledge of combining forms and meanings to achieve conformed spoken and written discourse); and strategic competency (knowledge of nonverbal and verbal communication strategies) (Liu, 2001). Social decentring refers to the ability to communicate in ways that make sense to others who are from a different culture. Since international students usually only have a monocultural perspective, it is a barrier for them to understand

and adapt to those who are culturally different. Knowing about the host culture is a necessary condition to acquire social decentring. This includes knowing the host culture's history, values, and non-verbal norms which can reduce the level of anxiety in the process of intercultural communication and minimise intercultural misunderstanding. Successful adaptation is also related to intercultural communication. The ability of the international students to adapt to different perspectives arising from cultural differences is strongly tied to communication competency. Competency in communication in the host culture impacts upon a student's confidence in adapting to the host culture and the quality of his/her social interaction. Communication competency also influences an international student's social integration, which refers to the degree to which he/she engages in the social networks of the host culture (Arthur, 2004; Redmond & Bunyi, 1993a).

Due to deficient intercultural communication competency, international students usually feel that it is demanding to make effective communication with other group socially. Even though some international students have got high scores in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), they are still dissatisfied with their communication competency in a real life communication context. They often find it difficult to adapt to unfamiliar communication patterns including the many different ways people send and receive information, express emotion and influence each other. Moreover, they generally know little about the rules and conventions of interpersonal interaction in the new cultural context (Ward, et al., 2001). Therefore, deficient social communication competency not only limits the degree of the international student's successful adaptation to the new communication context, but also influences his/her psychological wellbeing and may result in mental stress. Redmond and Bunyi (1993a) examined the relationship between psychological stress and intercultural communication competence among 644 international students attending a university in the United States. They found that two factors of intercultural communication competence – adaptation and social decentring – accounted for 16% of the variance in the amount of stress reported, and communication effectiveness, adaptation, and social integration accounted for 46% of the variance in reported effectiveness in handling stress.

2.5.3.3 Social contact

The extent of social contact within the host society is another element relating to international students' socio-cultural adjustment. Many previous studies (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Selltitz, 1963) agreed that social contact has positive influences on the international students' social, cultural, and academic adaptation. Selltitz's (1963) interviews with 348 male international students showed that close social interactions with American local people are related to favourable attitudes to American culture and better adaptation. According to Heikinheimo and Shute (1986), international students who have more social contacts with people in the host country have better social, cultural, and academic adaptation. Klineberg and Hull's (1979) research had a similar conclusion that international students who have made satisfactory social contact, and established positive relationships with the local community during their sojourn, report greater satisfaction in their academic and social experience.

However, according to the sojourner theory (Siu, 1952) and other researchers (Rosenthal, et al., 2006; Ward, et al., 2001), most international students interact mainly with individuals whose cultural background is similar to their own. For example, Rosenthal et al.'s (2006) study found that 29.6% of the participants in their study had no social contact with Australians within the university, and 39.4% had no contact with Australians outside the university. Only 20% of the participants had a reasonable degree of social contact with Australians in either context.

2.5.3.4 Racial discrimination

A review of literature (Brislin, Cushner, Cherrie, & Yong, 1986; Searle & Ward, 1990) indicated that a sense of exclusion and alienation among international students is largely due to perceived racial discrimination from the host country. According to Matsumoto and Juang (2004), discrimination is a perception that one is subjected to unfair treatment on the basis of one's group membership. Previous studies have also reported that international students generally experience racial discrimination in the host social context. For example, Constantine et al.'s (2005) qualitative research found that African students who studied in an American university typically perceived Americans viewing Africans as less intelligent than themselves, and

occasionally reported that they were also prejudiced by Black Americans and other international students. Ward and Masgoret's (2004) research conducted in New Zealand also found that students from Europe, North America, South America and Australia reported the least discrimination, while students from Asian countries reported more discrimination. Students with less social contact with local people, poorer English skills and having more contact with co-national friends reported more discrimination.

In fact, there is little opportunity for international students to confront racial discrimination before arriving in a host country (Arthur, 2004; Gurin, Hurtado, & Peng, 1994). They experience racial discrimination due to a shift from being members of the majority race to the minority race (Arthur, 2004) and also due to social stigma in the host society (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). According to Crocker, Major and Steele (1998), social stigma is a function of having a particular attribute that conveys a devalued social identity in a particular context. A particular attribute usually refers to skin colour, accented speech, gender, homelessness, mental illness, homosexuality and so forth. Since these attributes are generally related to minority standing and powerlessness, they may cause negative stigmatisation and discrimination. This kind of a sense of rejection and exclusion due to discrimination may harm the stigmatised minority's self-esteem and psychological wellbeing. Research has found that perceived frequency and pervasiveness of discrimination can cause depression (Fribley, 1993), anxiety (Baumeister & Tice, 1990), lowering self-esteem (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995) and a feeling of meaninglessness of one's existence (Williams, Shore, & Grahe, 1998).

2.5.4 Personal Psychological Adjustment

Because of the geographic transition and lack of support systems, international students have to face unique difficulties in general living, academic and social-cultural adjustment all by themselves. Therefore, they are highly at risk of psychological problems (Mori, 2000), and compared with local students, they have higher psychiatric morbidity rates (Janca & Hetzer, 1992). A review of literature

notes that homesickness, loneliness, depression and anxiety are probably the most common psychological adjustment problems, and these emotional problems have a deleterious consequence to the international students' wellbeing and adaptation to the new environment.

2.5.4.1 Homesickness

Homesickness is the most frequently reported complaints among international students (Hannigan, 2007; Yi, Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003). According to Rajapaksa and Dundes (2002), more than 30% of international university students felt homesick. Lu (1990) revealed that 95% of Chinese students studying in the United Kingdom had experienced homesickness. Language skills, cultural differences and gender are correlated with the students' homesickness. "Language proficiency is an important factor both within and beyond the classroom wall" (Hannigan, 2007, p. 63). Students who have lower host country language proficiency may feel more homesick, since deficiencies in the host language locks international students out of academic and social interaction, thus making them appear to be particularly foreign. The greater the degree of differences between the international students' home and host cultures, the more likely that homesickness will be experienced (Ye, 2005). Gender has also been found to considerably affect homesickness (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Pruitt, 1978; Ye, 2005; Zwingmann & Gunn, 1983). Females are more at risk than males probably because female students tend to be passive, dependent and family oriented in their traditional cultures.

2.5.4.2 Loneliness

Loneliness is another psychological hurdle for international students. According to an Australian study (Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008), 65% of international students reported that they experienced loneliness and isolation. Constantine et al.'s (2005) and McClure's (2007) studies focused on respectively African undergraduate students in an American university and Chinese postgraduate students in a Singaporean university. Both studies found that loneliness and isolation were common psychological adjustment difficulties for international students.

“Loneliness is more likely to occur under circumstances such as prolonged absence from home or the loss of a significant other” (Sawir, et al., 2008, p. 151).

Psychologically, everybody has a need to belong, but if this need is not satisfied, negative feelings such as loneliness will be generated (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). It can be managed but cannot be prevented completely (Rokach & Brock, 1998).

Weiss (1973) categorised two types of loneliness: personal loneliness and social loneliness. Personal loneliness, characterised by anxiety and apprehension, is generally caused by the loss of a truly intimate tie with the parents, a child, spouse or lover; social loneliness, characterised by boredom and a sense of exclusion, is caused by a lack of satisfactory social networks that share or partly share one’s view of the world. Apart from the two types of loneliness mentioned above, Sawir et al.’s (2008) study proposed a third type of loneliness, especially for international students – institutional relationship loneliness, which is caused by classroom activities, relationship between students and teachers, and relationship between students and administration. Some students feel lonely in the institutional context, especially when they have been experiencing personal or social loneliness.

The Literature Review has also covered many significant studies regarding the correlation between loneliness and demographic factors such as age and gender. According to Green, Richardson and Schatten-Jones (2001), young students have a significantly negative correlation between loneliness and the number of social contacts. Some research studies (e.g. Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Sawir, et al., 2008; Weiss, 1973) has reported that women are more likely to feel lonely than men, while other studies (Deniz, Hamarta, & Ari, 2005; Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002) drew a different conclusion that male students have a greater level of loneliness than female students. However, other studies (e.g. Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980) have pointed out that gender is not significantly associated with loneliness.

2.5.4.3 Depression

Depression is a common emotional disorder which causes distress and impairs functioning (Khawaja & Bryden, 2006). The mood, cognitive, behavioural, and

physical symptoms are main characteristics of this disorder (Ainsworth, 2000; Greist & Jefferson, 1992). Mood in depression is generally expressed as sad, depressed, and worried. Feelings of emptiness, pessimism, hopelessness, helplessness and unreasonable guilt are also affective symptoms. The cognitive ability of the brain is affected by a depressive disorder. A lack of concentration, slowed thinking, forgetfulness, and difficulty with decision-making are obvious symptoms affecting cognitive ability. Behavioural changes caused by a depressive disorder are characterised by decreased activity levels and the affected person being withdrawn and less talkative. Furthermore, people suffering from depression commonly experience changes in their physical functions. Insomnia and appetite disorders are common physical disorders caused by depression. A review of the literature indicates that depression in students have different manifestations from those of clinical depression. For example, depression in students more commonly affects the students' cognitive abilities, with major symptoms such as a lack of concentration, lack of energy, self-blame and pessimism (Cox, Enns, Borger, & Parker, 1999). Major clinical depressive symptoms such as insomnia and appetite disorders are not indicators of depression in students since depression in students is mainly caused by academic and social stress (Kitamura, Hirano, Chen, & Hirata, 2004; Smith, Rosenstein, & Granaas, 2001).

Besides academic and social stress, international students have to also confront acculturative stress and as a result, they are vulnerable to depression. According to Wei et al. (2007), approximately 30% of Asian international students were observed to have indicators of clinical depression. The literature provides many examples of the relationship between the levels of depression and demographic factors, such as age, gender, host language proficiency and length of stay.

The previous studies regarding age have had some controversial research findings. Oei and Notowidjojo (1990) reported that older international students in Australia have a higher level of depression than younger students, but Rosenthal et al. (2006) noted that younger students have a higher level of depression. Like age, there are also no consistent results regarding relationship between gender and depression. Some studies (Misra, et al., 2003; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002) agreed that female

international students tend to be more depressed than male students. In contrast, Poyrazli et al. (2002) found that male international students have a higher level of depression than female students. Additionally, English proficiency has a negative correlation with levels of depression (Poyrazli, et al., 2002; Sumer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008; Yeh & Inose, 2003). The relationship between length of stay and the level of depression is consistent with a U-curve hypothesis: an international student staying in a host country for more than one year is more depressed than the one staying for less than a year, and those staying for two to four years are more depressed than those who have been in the host country for more than four years (Sumer, et al., 2008).

2.5.4.4 Anxiety

Anxiety is another common psychological reaction. It is a state of mood of which an excess is unpleasant, and it is concerned with uncertainty and is directed towards the future rather than the past, which is an important differentiator from depression. Anxiety has at least four separate meanings: “a state of agitation and tension, troubled in mind, solicitous desire to effect some purpose, and uneasiness about a coming event” (Tyrer, 1999, p. 4).

There is limited literature on the topic of anxiety among international students. Only Rosenthal et al. (2006) identified some demographic and situational variables that distinguish the international students’ levels of anxiety. For example, younger students are found to be more anxious than older students, single students have higher levels of anxiety than students with partners and undergraduate students are more anxious than students enrolled in high degree. Students who speak a language other than English off campus have a significantly higher level of anxiety than those who do not.

2.6 Health-related behaviours

Behaviour and life-style are those habits, activities and customs that characterise an individual’s everyday life (Harper, et al., 1994). Life-style is closely related to one’s health. Breslow and Breslow (1993) found that people with a poor health life-style

would experience greater mortality and occurrence of physical disability than those with good health habits. A large number of studies has increasingly emphasised the importance of individual health behaviours and life-style in the prevention of physical disease and the enhancement of psychological wellbeing (Berkman & Breslow, 1983; Hamburg, 1982; Harper, et al., 1994). These negative behaviours include unhealthy eating, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and a lack of regular physical activities (Davis, Neuhaus, Moritz, Barclay, & Murphy, 1994; McGinnis & Foege, 1993). Positive changes in these behaviours, such as maintaining a healthy diet, giving up smoking, decreasing alcohol consumption and increasing physical activities are favourable to one's health (Laaksonen, Luoto, Helakorpi, & Uutela, 2002).

2.6.1.1 Food and diet

As everybody knows, food or diet has a direct influence on a person's health. "A healthy diet should contain all of the required nutrients and sufficient calories to balance energy expenditure and provide for growth and maintenance throughout the life cycle" (Bidlack, 1996, p. 422). A healthy diet can also help maintain one's mental health. For example, omega-3 fatty acids improve brain chemistry, pressor amines enhance mood and folic acid slows the aging process. Stress and some forms of thinking disorders can also be moderated by nutrition intake (Capra, 2007). Therefore, recommendations for a healthy diet include: decreasing intake of dietary fat, controlling caloric intake and enhancing nutrient density such as increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables (Bidlack, 1996).

However, there is little study investigating diet and health of international students. In fact, due to differences in diet and concepts of nutrition, most international students have difficulties in adapting to the local food and cooking style. Also, these students may have to face food or diet problems by themselves because of a lack of the usual family support and encouragement. This new "independence" would result in unhealthy dietary patterns such as skipping breakfast and increased snacking (Ramakrishna & Weiss, 1992). A study (Rosenthal, et al., 2006) conducted in Melbourne, Australia found that more than three-quarters of international

students said they paid attention to a balanced diet. Students who included home-cooked meals in their diet had perceived themselves as having better nutritional balance than those who obtained some of their meals from fast food sources, while students who often ate at café or restaurants did not differ significantly in their perception from those who did not. In addition, the study also revealed a relationship between students' financial resources and the students' perception of nutritional balance. Students who were more adequate in financial resources also perceived themselves as having a better nutritional balance.

2.6.1.2 Smoking/alcohol

Apart from diet, cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption are two important predictors of health because of their contribution to the etiology of many acute and chronic physical, psychological, and behavioural problems (Ashley & Rankin, 1988). Smoking is adverse to health, and has been related to a wide range of health problems and is thought of as one of the most important preventable causes of morbidity and mortality (Green & Harari, 1992). Major smoking-related diseases include cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (Harper, et al., 1994). Some previous researchers have studied the frequencies of smoking among university students. According to Metintas et al.'s (1998) study conducted in Turkey, the prevalence of smoking among university students was 42.5% and smoking was greatest among those who also drank alcohol. However, except for Rosenthal et al.'s (2006) study, there has been little literature on the smoking behaviour among international students. According to Rosenthal et al.'s study, 92% of the participants did not engage in smoking and 4.8% participants rarely smoked. Male students smoked more cigarettes than female students did.

Apart from smoking, diseases including esophageal cancer, liver cancer, mouth and oropharynx caners, and intentional injuries, such as self-inflicted injuries and homicide are major health problems that are mainly attributable to alcohol (Rehm, Room, & Monteiro, 2004; WHO, 2002). Some studies reported that alcohol is able to reduce an individual's negative feelings and make him/her relax. However, using alcohol as medication or a dependence on its consumption may lead to acyclical and

self-perpetuating, since the underlying anxiety will lead to increased alcohol drinking, which can change the physiology of the brain resulting in a depletion of the neurotransmitters it needs to reduce anxiety naturally. Therefore, the individual feels more anxious and requires more alcohol to control the feeling associated with his/her anxiety (Deborah, 2006). Rosenthal et al.'s (2006) study involved the examination of the international students' alcohol consumption in relation to behaviour. In the study, 35.9% of the respondents reported that they never drank, 38.4% rarely drank and about 1% drank most days or every day. The study also found that the longer the participants enrolled in the university, the higher the frequency of drinking.

2.6.1.3 Physical activities

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by the skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure. This can be measured in kilojoules (kJ) or kilocalories (kcal) ranging continuously from low to high, and is positively correlated to physical fitness, which is a physiologic state of wellbeing that allows one to carry out daily tasks with vigour and alertness and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and to meet unforeseen emergencies (Caspersen, Powell, & Christenson, 1985; Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). Physical activities can be categorised by occurrence time: sleeping, at work, and at leisure, and the caloric sum of each category is the total energy expenditure (Montoye, 1975). Exercise is a subset belonging to the leisure-time category of physical activity that is planned, repetitive and purposive in the terms of improvement or maintenance of one or more component of physical fitness (Caspersen, et al., 1985). Since there is small energy expenditure during sleep, and also during other physical activities such as occupational, household and many daily tasks which are done with little regard to physical fitness, exercise is more likely to be an important part of some categories of physical activity than others (Caspersen, et al., 1985).

Previous studies (Rauramaa et al., 1986; Warburton, Gledhill, Jamnik, Krip, & Card, 1999; Warburton, Gledhill, & Quinney, 2001a, 2001b) found that routine physical activity can improve body composition, enhance lipid lipoprotein profiles, improve

glucose homeostasis and insulin sensitivity, reduce blood pressure, decrease blood coagulation and augment cardiac function. Many studies (Lee & Skerrett, 2001; Paffenbarger, Hyde, Wing, & Heieh, 1986; Paffenbarger et al., 1993) show that an average energy expenditure of about 1000 kcal per week is associated with a 20%-30% reduction in mortality. The dose-response relationship between physical activity and health status has been applied in many areas of disease prevention. For example, a moderate to intense level of exercise is one of the effective preventive strategies against type 2 diabetes (Lynch et al., 1996), and moderate to intense level of physical activities also have greater protective effects against breast and colon cancer than activities of low intensity (Thune & Furberg, 2001). Besides physical health benefits, mental health is also positively affected by vigorous physical activities. The psychological benefits of exercising include improved academic performance, memory, perception, confidence and emotional stability, and also a reduction in anger, anxiety, depression and stress response (Taylor, Sallis, & Needle, 1985).

Consequently, physical activities are beneficial to a person's physical and mental health, but there has been little research on the international students' physical activities pattern and its influence on their physical and mental health.

2.7 Coping strategies

The four categories of adjustment problems mentioned above are commonly encountered by international students. These problems, more or less influence the degree of the international students' adaptation to the host country as well as impact on their physical, psychological and social wellbeing in the new environment. A number of scholars (Adelman, 1988; Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Folkmen & Lazarus, 1985; Furnham & Li, 1993; Sykes & Eden, 1987; Ward, et al., 2001) conducted research on coping strategies to solve these problems and promote health and wellbeing.

Coping refers to "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding

the resources of the person” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). It is an important mediator between negative life events and psychological wellbeing (Herman-Stahl, Stemmler, & Petersen, 1995). Effective coping may enhance psychological wellbeing, whereas ineffective coping may exacerbate the effects of stress on adjustment (Herman-Stahl, et al., 1995).

A review of literature (Adelman, 1988; Carver, et al., 1989; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Furnham & Li, 1993; Sykes & Eden, 1987; Thoits, 1995; Walsh, 2008; Ward, et al., 2001) indicated that there are two categories of coping strategies: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping focuses on problem solving or doing something to alter the source of the stress. Emotion-focused coping aims to reduce or manage the emotional distress that is related to the situation (Carver, et al., 1989). These two coping styles respectively represent both the cognitive and emotional activity oriented either toward or away from stress threats (Herman-Stahl, et al., 1995).

2.7.1 Problem-focused coping

Problem-focused coping seeks to change the distressed situation by identifying the problem, gathering information, finding alternative solutions, and acting, which is more frequently used to deal with some sources of stress that are considered by the person as changeable or something constructive can be done. Specifically, there are a range of strategies belonging to this coping style. According to Carver et al. (1989), planning, active coping, suppression, restraint, seeking social support for instrumental reasons are typical problem-focused coping strategies.

- Planning is thinking about how to cope with a stressor. Coming up with action strategies, thinking about what steps to take and how to deal with the problem are grouped under this coping type.
- Active coping is the coping process of taking action to try to remove the stressor or to reduce its effects. Initiating direct action, increasing one’s efforts and trying to conduct a coping attempt in a stepwise way are strategies of active coping.

- Suppression means putting other things aside or trying to avoid becoming distracted by other events in order to deal with the stressor. The person may suppress involvement in other activities or the processing of information in order to concentrate more fully on the stressor threat at hand.
- Restraint means holding oneself back and waiting until an appropriate opportunity to act presents itself, not acting prematurely. This is a passive strategy in the problem-focused coping style, but it is an active coping strategy in the sense that the person's behaviour is focused on dealing effectively with the stressor.
- Seeking social support for instrumental reasons. People normally seek social support for two reasons – instrumental and emotional reasons. For instrumental reasons, people are seeking information, advice and assistance, which belong to the problem-focused coping style, while for emotional reasons, individuals want to receive emotional support, sympathy, or understanding, which belongs to one of emotion-focused coping strategies.

2.7.2 Emotion-focused coping

Emotion-focused coping seeks to control or regulate negative emotional responses to stressors. This is frequently used to deal with some sources of stress that are considered by the person as unchangeable and must be endured (Chun & Poole, 2009; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Just as with the problem-focused coping style, there are a number of coping strategies within the emotion-focused coping group. However, emotion-focused coping strategies are normally dysfunctional and debilitating (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2008). Based on the literature (Carver, et al., 1989), they include seeking social support for emotional reasons, venting of emotion, behavioural disengagement, mental disengagement, positive reappraisal, denial, acceptance and religion:

- Seeking social support for emotional reasons, which has been mentioned in the above section, is one of the emotion-focused coping strategies.
- Venting of emotion is trying to find a vent to express distressed feelings or to release negative emotions.

- Behavioural disengagement means reducing one's effort to deal with the stressor, even giving up trying to reach the goals with which the stressor is interfering. Theoretically, behavioural disengagement is most likely to occur when people expect poor coping outcomes.
- Mental disengagement, a variation of behavioural disengagement, usually occurs when the situations prevent behavioural disengagement. It is used to distract the person from thinking about the events with which the stressor is interfering. Escaping through sleep, immersing in TV programmes, and daydreaming are typical examples of these tactics. It is worth noting that behavioural and mental disengagement is sometimes a highly adaptive response, but this response often impedes adaptive coping (Billings & Moos, 1984).
- Positive reappraisal means construing a stress transaction in positive terms so as to intrinsically lead the person to continue or commence the coping action. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) pointed out that positive reappraisal is more about managing the stressors than dealing with the stress.
- Denial means denying the reality so as to relieve the stress temporarily. However, denial is normally useful to minimise distress at the initial stage but impedes coping later on since denial would allow the events to grow more serious or create additional problems (Levine et al., 1987; Matthews, Siegel, Kuller, Thompson, & Varat, 1983).
- Acceptance, which is the opposite of denial, means to accept the reality of a stressful situation. It normally occurs when the stressor is something that must be accommodated rather than when the stressor can easily be changed.
- Religion is an important coping strategy that cannot be ignored. It can serve as a source of emotional and spiritual support and a vehicle for positive growth and reinterpretation, or as an active coping tactic.

In summary, coping should be regarded as a dynamic process that shifts naturally from stage to stage of a stressful transaction (Carver, et al., 1989). Additionally, the effectiveness of coping strategies has been shown to vary with the types of problems (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978) and degree of stressfulness of a situation (Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987; Aldwin & Revenson, 1987). A problem-focused coping

style is more dependent on the context in which stress is occurring, while emotion-focused coping strategies are often influenced by personality factors (Lee & Chen, 2000). In addition, a review of literature (Clements & Sawhney, 2000; DeGenova, Patton, Jurich, & McDermid, 2001; Ebata & Moos, 1991; Penley, Tomaka, & Wiebe, 2002) indicates that problem-focused coping is associated with more positive adjustment and positive mental health, while emotion-focused coping strategies, especially disengagement and denial, are generally linked with poorer psychological adjustment. They all generally agreed that emotion-focused coping strategies such as disengagement and denial strategies may be effective in the short term, but the continued reliance on these coping strategies would prevent individuals from directly confronting and solving the problems which would influence their degree of adjustment and mental health in the long term.

2.7.3 Relationships with demographic factors

A review of literature found that gender and age are two demographic factors which are mostly discussed in previous research. According to Rawson, Palmer, and Henderson (1999), males are inclined to find various ways to solve problems, which means they are more likely to use problem-focused coping strategies, whereas females intend to employ emotional and social resources to release their psychological stress. Li, DiGiuseppe and Froh's (2006) research findings are basically in line with the above study that girls are inclined to use emotion-focused coping, but the difference is that girls are also more likely to use problem-focused coping than boys. In other words, girls employ a higher use of both types of coping strategies. Besides, Haarr and Morash's (1999) research argued that compared with men, women are more likely to adopt avoidance coping, which includes strategies of behavioural disengagement, denial, venting and positive reappraisal (Ward & Kennedy, 2001). However, both Amole (2005) and Dafna and Tali (2005) objected that males tend to use avoidance coping more than women.

Apart from gender, age is another demographic parameter which affects the usage of coping strategies discussed in the literature. Most studies (Aldwin, Sutton, Chiara, & Spiro, 1996; Blanchard-Fields, Sulsky, & Robinson-Whelen, 1991; Dafna & Tali,

2005; Richaud de minzi & Sacchi, 2005) draw a similar conclusion that older students prefer problem-focused coping while younger students are more likely to adopt emotion-focused strategies. Seepersad (2001) basically agreed with the conclusion that young adults employ emotion-focused coping significantly more often than adults, but he noted that there is no significant difference in the use of problem-focused coping between younger adults and adults. Contratively, Folkman, Lazarus, Pimley and Vovacek's (1987) studies argued that older people use less problem solving coping and more avoidance coping.

There is a great deal of literature on the association between the use of coping strategies and the two demographic characteristics of age and gender. In the cross-cultural research domain, demographic parameters such as length of stay in the host country and proficiency in the language of the host country are also worthy of examination. However, there is little literature focused on these factors.

2.8 Social support

Social support can be defined as the availability of caring persons who can be relied on for assistance at the time of stress (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Due to the geographical distance from the family and cultural differences, international students have fewer opportunities to access their family and establish interdependent networks compared with local students (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2008). A number of research works (Crockett et al., 2007; Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004) have found that social support, in the form of practical assistance has a stress-buffering effect for international students, including their acculturative stress, depressive symptoms, reactions to stressors and life satisfaction, etc. Other studies (Jou & Fukada, 1995; Misra, et al., 2003; Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002; Yeh & Inose, 2003) have also agreed that social support greatly influences the international students' health and wellbeing. Individuals with ineffective social support may be more sensitive to life stress, and they would feel undervalued and experience higher levels of distress (Hovey & Magana, 2000; Rudd, 1990).

There are two types of social support: instrumental support and emotional support. Instrumental support refers to assistance with practical problems, providing information, advice, and tangible aid. Emotional support concentrates on affective aid, showing sympathy and understanding (Sarason, et al., 1990). Furthermore, social supports usually come from a variety of sources, such as family, friends, universities and other larger communities, so it is necessary to make a distinction among the different sources of social support because each source may help the students cope with various emotional, social, and educational problems in a distinct manner (Olson & Shultz, 1994; Ward, et al., 2001). Students opt for family, friends, or other students to seek help with emotional-social problems, and they opt for lecturers, administration staff for educational problems (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986).

2.8.1 Family

Family is usually the main source of support, and it is perceived as a most intimate group of persons who take care of you and support you, emotionally and financially (Williams, 2007). The relationship between financial support provided by family and international students' wellbeing has been discussed before (See 2.3.1.5). Emotional support from family mainly focuses on dealing with being upset, feeling loneliness and discussing relationship issues (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Some international students rely on their parents' judgment. Even if they sometimes disagree with their judgment, they still have faith that their parents have their best interests at heart. However, some international students may try to conceal the difficulties from their families due to concern about loss of face (Williams, 2007). For married students, marital relationships are considered as the primary source of social support. According to Stone Feinstein and Ward (1990), quality of spousal relationship is one of the most significant predictors of psychological wellbeing of sojourners, since harmonious marital relationships can offer a good source of social support and is buffer to the acculturative stress (Ward, et al., 2001).

2.8.2 Friends

Support from friends is also an indispensable source of help for coping with stress. International students may rely heavily on their peers, rather than professionals for information support and emotional support (Heggins & Jackson, 2003). Many studies (Sykes & Eden, 1987; Ward, et al., 2001) noted that co-national friends are the most powerful source of support for overseas students. Students from the same nation may offer some useful resources and share practical strategies for coping with stress in a new environment. Also, co-national friends can provide emotional support which helps the student reduce depression and overcome loneliness. Based on a study conducted in New Zealand (Ward & Kennedy, 1993b), satisfaction with co-national networking had a positive correlation with Malaysian and Singaporean students' psychological adjustment. However, contact with only co-national friends would impede culture learning and engagement into the host society (Adelman, 1988; Arthur, 2004). Just as Pruitt's (1978) research conducted in the United States, the overall degree of adjustment was poorer for those international students who had more contact with co-national friends. Therefore, co-national relationship can be both helpful or harmful, depending on the nature of the relationship and the group's contact with other groups, especially with members of the host culture (Ward, et al., 2001).

Therefore, establishing friendship with the local community is of importance to international students when coping with stress and promoting psychological wellbeing. Klingberg and Hull (1979) pointed out that familiarisation within the local context is related to the general wellbeing of foreign students, in both non-academic and academic aspects. Other researchers have maintained a similar opinion that satisfaction with the host national relationship has been positively related to the psychological wellbeing of sojourners (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1993a). Many international students however report that establishing friendship with local students is disappointing and a difficult experience (Arthur, 2004), especially Asian students who may experience greater difficulties than other international students in terms of adjusting to campus life and establishing

friendship with host nationals (Sodowsky & Plake, 1992; Talbot, Geelhoed, & Ninggal, 1999) .

2.8.3 University

University is another essential social support source for international students to adjust to the new academic environment. Support from universities or other educational institutions mainly concern practical problems, including educational problems, language used and living arrangements (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Many universities have established a special office serving international students, offering assistance programmes, such as orientation programmes geared to international students' lifestyle, English language support, peer programme, etc. (Jenkins & Galloway, 2009) to try to provide effective support to international students. However, Sawir et al.'s (2008) study found that few students rely on the support of the university since not all know that the services are available, especially at the early stages of their study.

2.9 Conclusion

An in-depth and comprehensive review of literature gave a solid theoretical guidance and reference to this study. There has been a great deal of research studies concentrating on adjustment problems encountered by the international students provided a solid theoretical guidance to this. However, research gaps still emerged and existed between literature and the undertaking study. Firstly, few previous studies took the geographic context into account when investigating international students' views and attitudes to the process of the environmental and cultural transition. The study is conducted in Tasmania which is a rural area in Australia. The Findings emerge from the study would be different from those studies conducted in urban areas in Australia or other countries. Secondly, previous studies seldom took international students' demographic factors into consideration. Demographic factors are supposed to significantly influence a person's responses to a new environment. Hence, four demographic variables – age, gender, English proficiency and length of stay in Tasmania are examined in this study to found out

significant relationship with these students' perception of health and wellbeing and their usage of coping strategies. Literature review indicated that there were few studies investigating and evaluating various sources of social support. All these issues raised from literature review will be addressed in this study.

The studies took these students' demographic factors into consideration and examined if there were relationship between peoples' responses different people with different demographic backgrounds would respond to situation and problems differently and employ different coping strategies, Furthermore, social support is also related to the international students' health and wellbeing. What kind of social support promotes their wellbeing? How do these international students evaluate the social support available to them? Are they effective? These are important issues rising from the literature review and will be the main focus of this study.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapters provided a solid research theoretical background on which this study is situated. This chapter discusses an essential part of the study: research methodology. As Kumar (2005) notes, “the validity of findings entirely depends upon the soundness of the research methodology adopted” (p. 4). Thus, the adoption of research methodology is a significant part of an entire research, which provides a methodological basis and research pathway for the following two chapters: quantitative data analysis (Chapter 4) and qualitative data analysis (Chapter 5). In this chapter, the research aim and objectives are presented first. The following discussion deals with issues about the research methodology with a focus on the rationale for adopting a mixed method approach, aspects of data collection and data analysis. Finally, ethical considerations for the study are discussed.

3.2 Research aim and objectives

Prior to discussing the detailed research methods and procedures, it is important to briefly re-visit the research aim and objectives of this study as they are closely related to the selection of the research approaches and the data collection and data analysis methods. The establishment of research aim and objectives is “like the identification of a destination before undertaking a journey” (Kumar, 2005, p. 40). Research aim is viewed as “a summary statement of what is proposed and the purpose of the study” (Bruce, Pope, & Stanistreet, 2008, p. 132). The aim of this study is to investigate the health and wellbeing of international tertiary students in Tasmania, Australia. Based on the research aim, five research objectives are developed. According to Bruce et al. (2008), a research objective is a “more specific description of what the various stages and/or components of the research being designed to achieve” (p. 132). There are five research objectives in this study:

- **Research Objective 1:** to identify the different kinds of problems in relation to health and wellbeing of the international students in the Tasmanian tertiary educational context.
- **Research Objective 2:** to examine how the demographic factors of these students (e.g., age, gender, English language proficiency, length of stay in Tasmania) influence their views and attitudes of health and wellbeing.
- **Research Objective 3:** to identify different coping strategies used by these students in dealing with health and wellbeing.
- **Research Objective 4:** to examine the significance of social support that is given to international students in regarding to health and wellbeing in the Tasmanian tertiary education context.
- **Research Objective 5:** to provide some suggestions and advices to international students, university academics and administrators, and social groups for enhancing the health and wellbeing of the international tertiary students in Tasmania.

3.3 Research approach

In order to achieve the research aim and objectives, a reliable and valid research design is important. According to Creswell (2003), “research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis”(p. 3). Research design includes three levels: research approach, research methods, and data collection.

The first level is the research approach, which is “a perspective based on a set of assumption, concepts, values, and practices that are held by a community of researchers. Most simply, it is an approach to thinking about and doing research” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 29). Quantitative research and qualitative research are two traditional types of research approaches.

If the research problem is testing a hypothesis or theory, identifying factors that influence an outcome, or examining relationships between variables, a quantitative approach is considered to be most appropriate. Pure quantitative research is considered as a deductive or confirmatory scientific method because the whole

research process attempts to test or confirm the hypotheses and theories. On the other hand, pure qualitative approach is an inductive scientific method and is more appropriate if the researcher would like to explore and discover a new concept or phenomenon in a social context (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Quantitative researchers generally hold objective views to observe the world. Thus, they usually adopt standardised questionnaires and quantitative measuring tools to measure objectively what is observed. However, qualitative researchers tend to be more subjective as they have to get close and be involved in the phenomena they study. Rather than using a standardised instrument or measuring device, qualitative researchers must collect data, ask questions, and make their own understanding to interpret what is being studied (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

These two types of research approaches each have their own prominent characteristics. However, in many cases, research is not a simple process but a mixed process of involving both quantitative and qualitative understanding. For certain phenomena, in order to have a complete explanation, researchers have to use both deductive and inductive methods. They might establish a hypothesis objectively deducted from a current theory and then collect data through a standardised questionnaire or other quantitative tools to determine whether the hypothesis is supported. Subsequently, qualitative data would be collected through in-depth interviews to provide explanatory and complementary information (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

The selection of research approach depends largely on the research problems. "Certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches" (Creswell, 2003, p. 21). Specifically, this study aims to investigate the international students' health and wellbeing in an Australian university. The project not only intends to examine these students' health and wellbeing and the factors influencing their health and wellbeing, but also aims to explore the students' insights and experiences in terms of their health and wellbeing. Thus both quantitative explanation and qualitative explorations were involved in this project. Traditional mono-method research, either quantitative or qualitative research approach,

cannot sufficiently address the complex research problem raised in this study. The combination of both research approaches provides “a more complete picture by noting trends and generalisations as well as in-depth knowledge of participants’ perspectives” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, p. 35). Thus, a mixed research approach was considered as most suitable for this study.

3.4 Research methods

As stated previously, a mixed research approach was chosen for the study. In this section, the utilisation of research method is discussed. Two questions should be considered when determining which research method to be used. Firstly, should quantitative and qualitative research be carried out concurrently or sequentially? Secondly, which – qualitative or quantitative research – should be given priority, or will they be given equal status in a project (Johnson & Christensen, 2004)? In this study, a concurrent triangulation research method was used to investigate international students’ health and wellbeing quantitatively and qualitatively. As the most common and well known mixed research method, concurrent triangulation method is “a one-phase design in which researchers implement the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe and with equal weight” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, pp. 63-64). In this case, the quantitative and qualitative data is collected and analysed concurrently but separately, and results from both sets of data are integrated during the interpretation and discussion phase.

The advantages of the research method are recognized as a justification of selection of the method for this study. One of the most obvious advantages of the concurrent triangulation method is to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method by means of triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative methods in one project (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Also, this research method is a one-phase research design, in which both types of data are collected during one phase at roughly the same time. Therefore, it is a more efficient design as compared to the sequential research methods design (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Lastly, the concurrent triangulation

method is characterised by its ability to allow easy comparison between quantitative and qualitative results, or to validate quantitative results with qualitative findings. Therefore, it is advantageous to drawing valid and well-substantiated conclusions about a single phenomenon (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

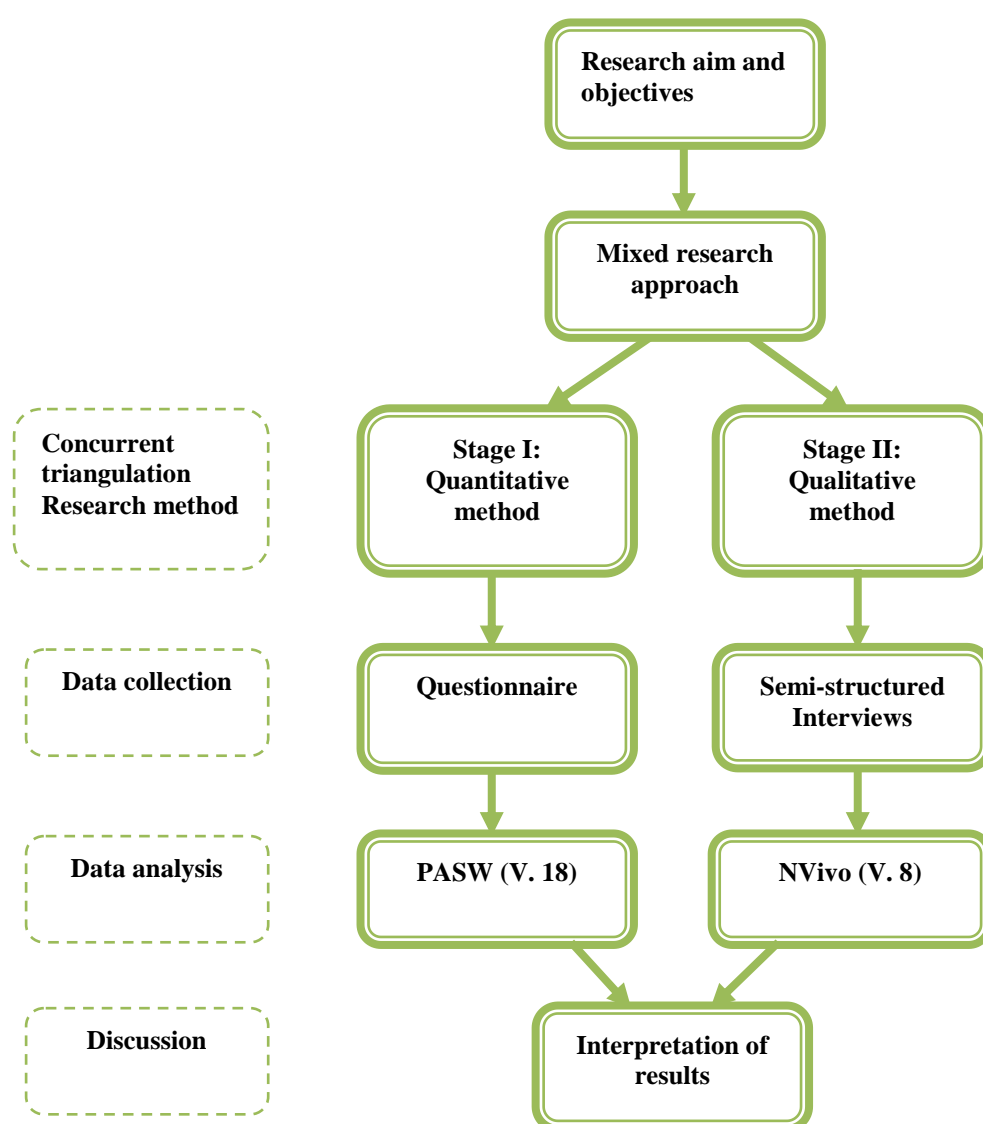


Figure 3.1. Research design of this study

3.5 Stage I: Quantitative research

The concurrent triangulation research method was determined and justified in the last section. The method consists of two stages: quantitative and qualitative research stages, which are conducted concurrently but separately. This section gives

the detailed steps of the first stage, including sample selection, instrument development, data collection, data management and data analysis. In this study, quantitative research is used to examine Research Objectives 1, 2 and 3.

3.5.1 Sample selection

The whole population within a phenomenon which a study intends to investigate has to be determined before sample selection. According to the research aim and objectives of this study, the target population are international students who are then studying on-campus at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). According to the UTAS statistics' report (UTAS, 2009a), the number of international students studying at UTAS was 5,167 in 2009. Among them, the 2,182 full-fee-paying off-shore overseas students were excluded the range of this study. There were 2,985 on-campus international students, of which 2,108 students studied on the Hobart campus (71%), 837 on the Launceston campus (28%), 4 in the North West Centre, 35 others and 1 unknown. International students from both the Hobart and Launceston campuses accounted for 99% of the whole on-campus international students at UTAS. As such, a research sample selected from these two main campuses should be representative of the whole on-shore international student population. Thus, a pool of 2,945 international students was established and the calculated sample size was approximately 340 at a 95% confidence level.

Selection criteria for the sample were international students who had been studying on the Launceston and Hobart campuses of UTAS for more than 6 months. The University International Services and Tasmania University Union (TUU) provided support in recruiting participants. Details of the data collection will be discussed in Section 3.5.3.

3.5.2 Survey questionnaire

3.5.2.1 Development of questionnaire items and scales

A self-report questionnaire was used as the instrument to collect quantitative data in this study. According to the issues addressed in this study, a draft questionnaire

with question items and scales were developed. The draft has 68 items consisting of 5 sections:

Part A has 12 items which were designed to collect the participants' background information, such as age, gender, country of origin, etc. Part B to Part E included questions asking for the participants' views and attitudes in relation to health and wellbeing issues. Part B *Your Views on Adjustment Problems* were divided into four subsections to examine participants' views to four categories of adjustment difficulties: *General Living Problems*, *Academic Problems*, *Socio-cultural Problems* and *Psychological Problems*; Part C was designed to investigate participants' attitudes to *Health Behaviours*, including dietary habit, smoking, alcohol consumption and physical activities; Part D was the section of *Coping Strategies*, two types of strategies demonstrated in the literature: problem-focused coping and emotional-focused coping were examined in the questionnaire; and Part E *Social Support* was designed to investigate participants' attitudes to social support they obtained in Tasmania.

Five-point Likert scales were used throughout to measure participants' views and attitudes to the questions in Part B to Part E of the questionnaire. Since questions in the Part B *Views on Adjustment Problems* subsection aimed to examine participants' views to adjustment problems, the Likert scale was formatted as 1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *A little*, 3 = *Somewhat*, 4 = *Very*, and 5 = *Extremely* to measure the participants' levels of satisfaction with their life in Tasmania. However, questions in Part C *Health Behaviours*, Part D *Coping Strategies*, and Part E *Social Support* were designed to examine the frequency of behaviours and thus the five-point Likert scale was formatted as 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, and 5 = *Very often* in these three sections.

All the items in the questionnaire were in the form of closed questions with a list of answers provided. Respondents were guided to select only one appropriate answer for each question. The initially designed questionnaire instrument can be seen in Appendix 2.7.

3.5.2.2 Piloting questionnaire

A pilot study was conducted before the main study. In the pilot study, a small amount of data was collected to test the procedure. By uncovering weaknesses in the design of the proposed research procedure, the draft questionnaire was then revised and improved before resources and time were expended on the large scale study (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). At this stage, the validity and reliability of the research instrument were tested. “Reliability and validity are the two most important psychometric properties to consider in using a test or assessment procedure” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 132).

A total of 120 participants were recruited by snowball sampling for this pilot study. These participants were international students who had been studying at UTAS for six months or longer. The recruitment started with a few international students who had agreed to distribute the information sheet and to explain the project background and survey process to their network of UTAS international students. The international students the researcher first approached were students on the Launceston campus. As it was easier and more convenient for them to access potential participants in Launceston, as a result, all 120 participants in the pilot study were from the Launceston campus.

3.5.2.2.1 Validity

“Validity refer to the issue of whether an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measure that concept” (Bryman, 2008, p. 151). Therefore, validity can ensure that correct research procedures are applied to find answers to a question (Kumar, 2005). In this study, content validity and construct validity of the research instrument were both assessed.

3.5.2.2.1.1 Content validity

In order to improve the quality and efficiency of the questionnaire, content validation was undertaken to determine the degree to which “the items, tasks, or questions on [the] test adequately represent the domain of interest” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 142). The formatting, wording, administration and scoring of the test were also examined to avoid ambiguous expression and improve validity

(Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Content validation of the questionnaire was carried out with five academics or experts in the population health field and 120 international students. The conclusion was that the content of the questionnaire basically covered the research interests intended to be examined in this study. However, as some of academics' suggestion, Part E *Social Support* was removed from the questionnaire to the qualitative research stage (Stage II) because they did not agree that 4 close-ended questions in the questionnaire were sufficient to in-depth address the participants' attitudes and evaluation to social support they obtained in Tasmania and the semi-structured interview in the qualitative research stage would be able to explore more detailed perceptions of the participants. Besides, the following minor changes were made to the instrument:

- To avoid repetitive statements, Q26 "I feel comfortable with the Australian way of life" and Q41 "I feel comfortable in Tasmania" were deleted.
- Some ambiguous and confusing statements were deleted or rewritten. For example, Q42 "I enjoy living in Tasmania" and Q50 "How often do you experience sleeplessness" were deleted. Q27 "I am used to the Australian speech" was rewritten into "I am used to the Australian accent". Q37 "I have no one to talk about my personal problems" was revised to "It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends". Q60 "Force myself to do other things to take off my mind" was changed to "Force myself to do other things to take my mind off the problem". Q63 "Accept the reality of the fact" was changed to "Accept the reality".
- Some grammatical errors were corrected. For example, Q17 "I am satisfied with job opportunity in Tasmania" was revised to "I am satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania".

3.5.2.2.1.2 Construct Validity

Construct validation was assessed by exploratory factor analysis. "Factor analysis is a statistical procedure that analyses the relationships among items to determine whether a test is *unidimensional* (i.e. all of the items measure a single construct) or *multidimensional* (i.e. different sets of items tap different constructs or different components of a broader construct)" (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 144). To

conduct a factor analysis, it is essential to test the data for the adequacy and the degree of relatedness of the variables. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was calculated to measure sampling adequacy. According to Kaiser (1974), the sample is considered as adequate if the KMO value obtained is greater than 0.5. In Table 3.1, the KMO value for this study is 0.699, which indicates that the data are adequate for a factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity indicates whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, which would indicate that the variables are related (Sandhu, 2008). The value of the Bartlett's test of sphericity for this study is $0.000 < 0.05$, which means that there are significant relationships among the variables.

Table 3.1 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.699
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4260.320
	df	1128
	Sig.	.000

Subsequently, to investigate the underlying structure of a 60 item questionnaire, data collected from 120 participants were subjected to principal axis factoring with varimax rotation. Prior to running the principal axis factoring, an examination of data indicated that some variables were abnormally distributed. Given the robust nature of factor analysis, these deviations were not considered as problematic. Six factors (with Eigenvalues exceeding 1) were identified (See Table 3.3). These factors accounted for approximate 31% of the variance in the questionnaire data (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Total Variance Explained

Factors	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sum of Squared loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.659	11.788	11.789	5.020	10.459	10.459	4.401	9.168	9.168
2	3.471	7.231	19.021	2.805	5.843	16.302	2.835	5.907	15.075
3	3.018	6.288	25.309	2.398	4.996	21.298	2.497	5.202	20.277
4	2.478	5.162	30.471	1.802	3.754	25.052	1.894	3.945	24.222
5	2.223	4.631	35.102	1.600	3.333	28.385	1.773	3.693	27.916
6	1.924	4.007	39.109	1.257	2.618	31.003	1.482	3.087	31.003

Table 3.3. Results of Varimax Rotated Factors

Items	Question content	Factor loadings
Factor 1: Adjustment problems		
<i>Category A: General living problems</i>		
Q13.	I am satisfied with my accommodation.	.402
Q14.	I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	.413
Q15.	I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania.	.375
Q16.	I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania.	.481
Q17.	I am satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania.	.436
Q40.	I feel safe in Tasmania.	.361
<i>Category B: Academic problems</i>		
Q18.	I am satisfied with my English ability.	.536
Q19.	I am satisfied with the academic staff.	.618
Q20.	I am satisfied with the administration staff.	.548
Q21.	I am satisfied with my academic performance.	.483
Q22.	International students are well looked after by the University.	.523
Q23.	I am familiar with the university educational system here.	.476
Q24.	I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania.	.587
Q25.	I feel included in my class.	.374
<i>Category C: Socio-cultural problems</i>		
Q27.	I am used to the Australian accent.	.560
Q28.	I make friends with local people easily.	.535
Q29.	I have many friends at the University.	.411
Q30.	I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	.552
Q31.	Local people want to know about my culture.	.397
Factor 2: Racism and discrimination		
Q32.	Racism occurs in Tasmania.	.595
Q33.	I am treated unfairly because of my cultural background.	.535
Factor 3: Psychological issues		
Q34.	I feel homesick.	.616
Q35.	I feel upset easily.	.704
Q36.	I feel lonely in Tasmania.	.733
Q37.	It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.	.463
Q38.	I feel tired easily.	.506
Q51.	How often do you have exercises?	-.367
Factor 4: Health behaviours		
Q43.	I feel restless in Tasmania.	.325
Q44.	How often do you eat fast food?	.456
Q45.	How often do you eat vegetables?	-.427
Q46.	How often do you eat fruits?	-.483
Q47.	How often do you skip breakfast?	.338
Q48.	How often do you smoke?	.450

Q49.	How often do you drink alcohol?	.329
Factor 5: Coping strategies A		
Q39.	I feel motivated to study.	.343
Q52.	Make a plan for my next steps.	.577
Q53.	Take a direct approach to deal with a problem.	.644
Q54.	Focus on solving the problem, and put other things aside if necessary.	.621
Q55.	Wait for the right time to deal with the problem.	.452
Q56.	Try to get advice from someone on what to do.	.448
Q61.	Try to look at it from a positive way.	.434
Q63.	Accept the reality.	.487
Factor 6: Coping strategies B		
Q57.	Try to get sympathetic understanding from someone.	.528
Q58.	Try to vent my feelings.	.527
Q59.	Reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem.	.421
Q60.	Force myself to do other things to take my mind off the problem.	.521
Q62.	Pretend that it hasn't really happened.	.358
Q64.	Try to find support in my religion.	.528

Items examining the related issues were grouped into one factor. A label was then assigned to each factor according to their specific issues.

- Factor 1: Adjustment problems (Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q31, and Q40)
- Factor 2: Racism and discrimination (Q32, Q33)
- Factor 3: Psychological issues (Q34, Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38, and Q51)
- Factors 4: Health behaviours (Q43, Q44, Q45, Q46, Q47, Q48, and Q49)
- Factors 5: Coping strategies A (Q39, Q52, Q53, Q54, Q55, Q56, Q61, and Q63)
- Factors 6: Coping strategies B (Q57, Q58, Q59, Q60, Q62, and Q64)

All items were regrouped according to the result of the analysis. However, to better address the research objectives and to facilitate data analysis, a number of adjustments were made to the questionnaire structure:

- Factor 5 and Factor 6 were combined into one group because they both focus on examining the coping strategies adopted by the participants;
- Q51 “How often do you do exercises?” was grouped into “Factor 4: Health behaviours”, rather than “Factor 3: Psychological issues”;
- Q39 “I feel motivated to study” was moved from “Factor 5: Coping strategies A” to “Factors 3: Psychological issues”; and

- Q43 “I feel restless in Tasmania” was grouped into “Factor 3: Psychological issues”, rather than “Factor 4: Health behaviours”.

Apart from the above adjustments, Factor 1 was divided into the following three subcategories to facilitate data analysis:

- Category A: General living problems;
- Category B: Academic problems; and
- Category C: Socio-cultural problems;

After regrouping and amendments, five factors (themes) were determined in this questionnaire:

- Theme 1: Adaptation problems
- Theme 2: Racism and discrimination
- Theme 3: Psychological issues
- Theme 4: Health behaviours
- Theme 5: Coping strategies

3.5.2.2.2 *Reliability*

Reliability refers to the quality of a measurement procedure that provides consistency, repeatability and accuracy (Bryman, 2008; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Kumar, 2005). It is an important research criterion. Cronbach’s alpha was used as a coefficient to test the internal consistency of the instrument in this study. Cronbach’s alpha varies between 1 (*denoting perfect internal reliability*) and 0 (*denoting no internal reliability*) and 0.60 is usually referred to as a satisfactory level (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The value of Cronbach’s alpha obtained for this questionnaire from PASW (Version 18) was 0.749, which was greater than 0.60. This indicated that the questionnaire had a satisfactory level of reliability.

3.5.2.3 **Final version of the questionnaire**

After modifications, a final 60-item questionnaire was established. 6 sections were identified: About You, Your Views on Adjustment Problems, Your Views on Racial Discrimination, Your Views on Psychological Issues, Your Attitudes on Health Behaviours, and Your Attitudes on Coping Strategies.

Part A: About You is a demographic information section. The 12 question items within this section include gender, age, country of origin, length of stay in Australia, academic faculty, degree currently pursuing, English proficiency, marital status, type of accommodation, sources of financial support, owning of transportation means and self-report physical health level.

Section B: Your Views on Adjustment Problems consists of 19 question items, which covers information about adjustment problems that are related to international students' health and wellbeing. The strength of the participants' responses to each statement is identified on a five-point Likert scale: *1 = Not at all, 2 = A little, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Very, and 5 = Extremely.*

Part C: Your Views on Racial Discrimination has 2 question items which aim to investigate the participants' views on racial discrimination. The five-point Likert scale used in this part is the same as that in Part B.

Part D: Your Views on Psychological Issues includes 7 items which are used to examine the participants' views on psychological issues. The five-point Likert scale used in this part is the same as that in Part B.

Part E: Health Behaviour evaluates the international students' physical health by examining their frequencies of health behaviours. There are 7 question items in the section. The response choices were formatted to a five-point Likert scale: *1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, and 5 = Very Often.*

Part F: Coping Strategies has 13 question items which investigate the coping strategies adopted by international students. Two types of coping strategies: problem-focused strategies and emotion-focused strategies were examined using the same scale as in Part E.

3.5.3 Quantitative data collection

Prior to data collection, an email was sent to the UTAS International Services office and the Tasmania University Union (TUU) to seek their support to assist in the research. With their permission, hardcopies of the questionnaire and information

sheets for survey participants were provided at the reception desks of the International Services office premises and the TUU premises. Students who were interested in participating could pick up the documents from the reception desks. Drop boxes were provided at the same places to collect completed questionnaires. In order to attract more international students, recruitment advertisement (See Appendix 2.6) was also posted at public places on UTAS campuses, such as libraries, learning hubs, cafeterias and some popular social networking websites including Facebook and Twitter.

Snowball sampling was also used in the main study. According to the UTAS statistics (UTAS, 2009a), the numbers of non-Asian students, including students from the Middle East, Europe, America and Africa are much fewer than Asian students. As a result, it was difficult to recruit students from these backgrounds. As Johnson and Christensen (2004) point out that snowball sampling can be especially useful to locate members of hard-to-find populations, snowball sampling was hence the preferred method to access non-Asian students.

The questionnaire could also be completed online. Students, who preferred to participate online, were sent an email to their university email addresses which directed them to a URL of the Survey Monkey website. The completed questionnaires were submitted directly to the website to ensure confidentiality and participants' anonymity.

3.5.4 Quantitative data management

After the collection of data, the process of preparing them for data analysis, i.e. data management, commenced. The first step of data management was data coding. In the beginning, a set of consecutive numerical codes (e.g., from 001 to 999) were assigned to every collected questionnaire. Next, the questionnaire codes were input into PASW. Each row of data represents the questionnaire collected and each column represents the specific variables/items asked in the questionnaire. Furthermore, each value under a variable was coded numerically once the data were entered. To illustrate, Male and Female are two values for the variable

Gender, and the two values were coded as: Male = 1 and Female = 2. The five scales were coded as *Not at all* = 1, *A little* = 2, *Somewhat* = 3, *Very* = 4 and *Extremely* = 5.

Once a dataset was established in the PASW, data cleaning was conducted to eliminate the errors that had occurred during data collection, coding and entry. Since every response must fall into a particular range, it is definitely considered as an error if a response is beyond the range. For example, the codes for gender are male = 1 and female = 2, and a code 3 will be invalid. Once an invalid code occurred, original data sheet was re-examined and this code was corrected.

3.5.5 Quantitative data analysis

While the previous sections have described the procedures of data collection in detail, this section discusses the process of data analysis. As stated previously, the research method utilised in the project is concurrent triangulation, one of the characteristics of which is that the quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed concurrently but separately, and both results will be integrated during the interpretation phase (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Since the two types of data are obviously distinctive, it requires different data analysis tools and different ways of data analysis.

Before statistical analysis, response rates are calculated and participants' demographic profiles are presented. It is followed by an assessment of sample normality to examine the distribution of data and determine which statistical tests should be used. Descriptive statistical analyses are then conducted to describe the frequencies and percentages of the participants' responses to each question item. Afterwards, inferential statistical analyses were conducted to investigate the associations between the variables. The detailed analysis process and results drawn from the quantitative data will be presented in Chapter 4.

3.6 Stage II: Qualitative research

As part of the research design, qualitative research was conducted concurrently with quantitative research in this study. Different from quantitative research,

qualitative research tends to explore participants' in-depth perceptions of the issues which would complement the quantitative research by providing more detailed and broader textural information. In this study, qualitative research is purposive for the analysis for Research Objectives 1, 3, 4, and 5.

3.6.1 Sample selection

In this study, 20 international students were recruited to engage in the semi-structured interviews. The selection criteria were:

- international students who were currently studying on Hobart campus or Launceston campus of the university; and
- Students who had been studying at the university for more than six months.

Other demographic factors were also taken into account in the process of recruitment. These factors included gender, age, country of origin, academic faculty, degree currently pursuing, length of stay and English levels. Besides, in order to meet the triangulation requirement of obtaining various perspectives from different sources, five staff members were invited to participate in the interviews. The selection criteria for staff were:

- Administrative staff who were working at the University International Services office; and
- Academic staff who had extensively contacts with international students.

Convenience and purposive sampling were utilised in the recruitment of international student participants for the interviews. The recruitment was conducted in two ways. The first way was that information sheets and interview consent forms were provided at the reception desks of the UTAS International Services office and the TUU for international students to pick up. These students may contact the researcher via the contact details provided in the information sheet. Another way was that questionnaire participants were invited to leave their contact details on the returned questionnaire if they were willing to be contacted for a follow up interview. The researcher contacted all these potential participants who were

interested in attending an interview, identified their demographic backgrounds, and then determined the final interview participant list.

As for staff participants, purposive sampling was used in the recruitment. Staff members who were working in the University International Service or academics who had extensive contacts with international students were invited to participate in this study. With the participants' consent (by signing a consent form), face-to-face interviews were conducted. The next section will introduce the procedures in detail.

3.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviewing is one of the most widely used qualitative data collection methods in which an interviewer (the researcher or someone working for the researcher) asks an interviewee (the research participant) questions to search for meanings from the conversation (Bryman, 2008; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Patton (1987, 1990, 2002) presents four types of interviews: closed fixed-response interview, informal conversational interview, interview guide approach, and standardised open-ended interview. The first type of interview is also defined as quantitative interview and the latter three as qualitative interviews. As Johnson and Christensen (2004) point out, qualitative interviews are usually characterised by open-ended questions, "which can be used to obtain in-depth information about a participant's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and feelings about a topic" (p. 183). Hence, qualitative interviews are also called in-depth interviews. The difference among the three types of qualitative interviews is the degree of structuring. Informal conversational interview is the least structured while the standardised open-ended interview is the most structured (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Specifically in this study, interviews are used to collect qualitative data, which are considered as an in-depth exploration of the international students' perceptions of their health and wellbeing in the new environment. Hence, quantitative interviews or closed fixed-response interviews are not appropriate for addressing the research aim. Similarly, although the questions in standardised open-ended interviews are in

the form of open-ended questions, this type of interview is still too structured to let participants freely express their feelings or flexibly describe their experiences. In contrary, informal conversational interviews are too spontaneous and loose-structured to focus on the research topic. Therefore, the interview guide approach is considered to be the most appropriate qualitative data collection method in this study. For this type of interviews, specific topics and open-ended questions are designed before the formal interview sessions in the form of an interview protocol. However, the interviewer can change the wording of the questions. Hence, the process of the interview is relatively unstructured. On the other hand, due to the presence of a pre-designed interview protocol, the interview can still cover all the topics. The interviewer needs to keep the interview on track when the interviewee goes off the topic.

According to the research objectives, an interview protocol was developed to seek the respondents' insights. In this study, two versions of interview protocols were established respectively for the international students (See Appendix 2.9) and the university staff (See Appendix 2.10). The interviews for the international students emphasised more on examining their physical, psychological and social health and wellbeing in Tasmania, investigating their experiences of adopting coping strategies, and evaluating the social support they received from different sources. Whereas, the interviews for the staff focused on enquiring about their understanding toward the adjustment problems that would be encountered by international student, and investigating their views on providing support to these students.

3.6.3 Qualitative data collection

The interviews were taken place in student meeting rooms or other public places at the mutual convenience of the interviewer and the interviewee. It should be mentioned that there was no a third person while the interviews were being conducted. The questions were sent to the participant prior to the interview. Each face-to-face interview normally took 30 to 40 minutes. With the participant's approval, the whole interview process was recorded on a portable electronic recording device and saved as an MP3 file on the researcher's computer with

password protection. The audio file was then transcribed into a textual file and was provided to the interviewee for accuracy checking. None of the suggested alterations to the transcripts indicated that the interviewee was satisfied with the accuracy of the transcripts.

3.6.4 Qualitative data management

The first step in the qualitative data management in this study was the establishment of a profile matrix to record the interviewees' demographic and social background information. Profile matrix is a case-by-attribute matrix which is usually used to record a set of data (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). It is usually in the form of a table, in which there is a row for each case, and a column for each attribute, with values entered in the cells. In addition, all the transcribed files were numbered according to the participants' occupations as Student 1, Student 2, or Academic staff 1, or Administrative staff. The numbered files were then imported into NVivo software for data analysis.

3.6.5 Qualitative data analysis

Coding is a first step to qualitative data analysis. "Coding is a method of conceptualising research data and classifying them into meaningful and relevant categories for the participants in the study" (Bowling, 2002, p. 364). The researcher of this study will read carefully the texts sentence by sentence, and draw and drop the relevant meaning units into the same coding groups. In the coding process, the researcher would re-establish new codes when she encounters new meaning that could not fit into any existing coding groups, or would re-order the hierarchies of the existing groups to make them more structured. In this way, concepts from the texts are grouped into codes; codes are grouped into broader themes; and finally themes are grouped into larger perspectives. After coding and grouping of the data, the researcher will present the results with a discussion of the evidence for the themes and/or with a presentation of figures that depict the frameworks of theories. All the details of data analysis will be presented in the Chapter 5 Qualitative Data Analysis.

3.7 Conclusion

The element that makes a research project fundamentally different from a non-research project is the methodology adopted. Methodology determines the pathway of a research project which guides the researcher in the essential tasks: data analysis and data collection. The choice of research methodology depends heavily on the nature of the research project, which relates to the research aim and objectives. Some researchers may choose only one research method for their research while others may choose a combined methods approach. The latter approach was adopted in this study as the researcher aimed to provide a comprehensive picture, both quantitatively and qualitatively, about the health and well-being of international students in this university discourse.

Chapter 4 Quantitative data analysis

4.1 Introduction

In the Methodology chapter (Chapter 3), a mixed research paradigm was adopted to enable the research aim and objectives to be achieved. Both quantitative data and qualitative data need to be collected in this study to completely address the research questions. Quantitative data are normally in a numerical form, defining and drawing statistical inference, whilst qualitative data are in a nonnumeric form, describing meanings in terms of categorisation or qualities. Because of differences in essence, the two types of data are analysed in distinctive ways. Quantitative data analysis is regarded as a measurement process by which statistical relationships between variables are defined or tested, and the findings are presented in numerical summaries and tables. In contrast, qualitative data analysis is defined as a range of procedures by which some forms of interpretation and explanation of the people and situation are investigated, and the findings are present in textural form (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Punch, 2005).

This chapter focuses on quantitative data analysis. Quantitative data in this study were gathered by a 60-item questionnaire instrument which had been developed prior to the data collection. As research design, quantitative data aim to address three research objectives in this study: research objective 1, 2 and 3. Research objective 1 aims to measure international students' life satisfaction in Tasmania and identify influential factors; research objective 2 examines statistical relationship between international students' demographics and their views and attitudes in health and wellbeing; and research objective 3 investigates international students' attitudes to coping strategies and define the relationships with their demographics.

This chapter consists of eight sections. After the first section of introduction, the responses rate and the quantitative data analysis procedures are briefly introduced in the section 4.2 and 4.3, and participants' demographic profiles are then presented in the section 4.4. Subsequently, descriptive analyses are conducted and participants' responses to each item are presented in section 4.5. Inferential analyses are then undertaken to find out factors which significantly influence participants' views and attitude to their health and wellbeing in section 4.6 and 4.7.

4.2 Response rate

The entire process of quantitative data collection took five months, from March to August 2010. With the permission of International Service at University of Tasmania and Tasmania University Union (TUU), 600 survey questionnaires were provided in their reception desks at the two main campuses: 300 for Hobart campus and 300 for Launceston campus (The detailed procedure of data collection was introduced in the chapter 3: Methodology). A total of 341 responses were gathered from two campuses: 135 responses were from Hobart campus and 206 responses were from Launceston campus to yield the total response rate of 56%.

4.3 Data analysis

Before any data analysis, sample normality is usually assessed to make sure the appropriate statistical tests to be used in subsequent data analysis since it is a prerequisite for many inferential statistical techniques (Coakes, Steed, & Ong, 2010). Normality of data distribution is presented as "a symmetrical, bell-shaped curve, which has the greatest frequency of scores in the middle, with smaller frequencies towards the extremes" (Pallant, 2007, p. 57). There are many ways to explore this assumption. The method used in this research is Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test. If the p-value is more than 0.05, the data is normally distributed. Results of data scanning indicated that the distributions of all the variables in this study were not normally distributed as all the p-values were less than 0.05. In fact, it is quite common in social sciences. It does not mean there is "a problem with the scale, but rather reflects the underlying nature of the construct being

measured”(Pallant, 2007, p. 62). Since there are violations of the distribution assumptions of parametric tests, alternative nonparametric statistic tests (e.g., Kruskal Wallis test, Mann Whitney U test, and Spearman’s rank-order correlation tests) were used for the quantitative data analysis of this study.

With regard to data analysis techniques in this study, descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency, and median) are first used to describe data distribution. Subsequently, inferential statistical techniques are employed to analyse the key factors that influence the participants’ views and attitudes to their health and wellbeing in Tasmania. Since sample data is not normally distributed, two non-parametric tests are utilised in this study to find out influential factors: Mann-Whitney U tests are conducted to find out statistically significant differences between two different groups, and Kruskal-Wallis tests are employed to compare three or more groups of a variable to examine if there are statistically significant differences among these groups. If significant differences were found out by Kruskal-Wallis test, a *post hoc* test -Mann Whitney U tests are further conducted to identify which two pairs of group have significant differences. Lastly, Spearman’s rank-order correlation tests are used to identify the relationship between two ordinal variables. In this study, the test is employed to examine the relationship between participants’ views and their psychological wellbeing. Significance is taken as $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$.

4.4 Participants’ demographic socio-demographic profiles

Participants’ socio-demographic profiles and other information were described initially. The Part A of the questionnaire was designed to collect participants’ demographic information, including their gender, age, country of origin, degree, length of stay, English proficiency, marital status, and physical health, accommodation, sources of financial support, and ownership of car/bike. Among them, gender, age, length of stay and English proficiency are utilised as independent variables in the subsequent data analysis to examine their potentially differential effects on participants’ views and attitudes.

4.4.1 Gender

There are 178 male and 163 female international students participated in the study, respectively accounting for 52% and 48% of the participants (Figure 4.1).

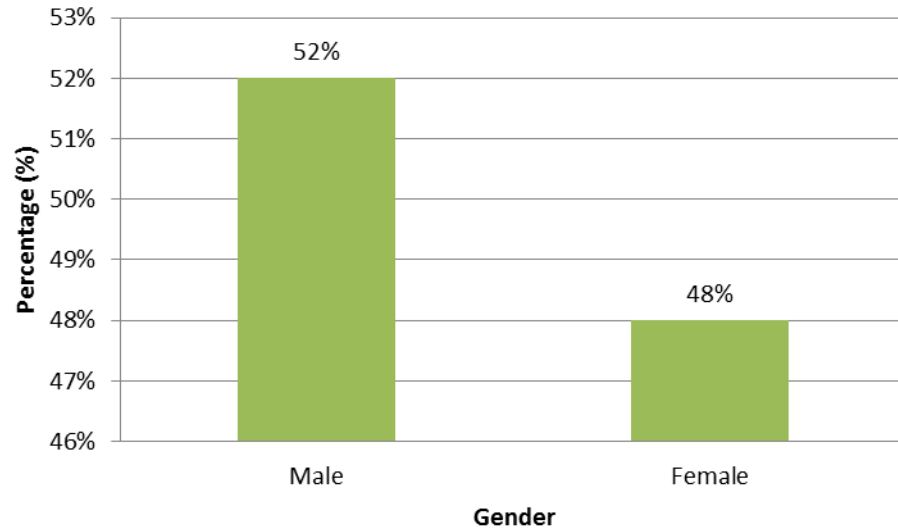


Figure 4.1. Distribution of participants by gender

4.4.2 Age groups

Among 341 participating international students, 49% of them were between 20 -24 years of age, 43% are over 24 years of age, and 9% are below 20 years of age.

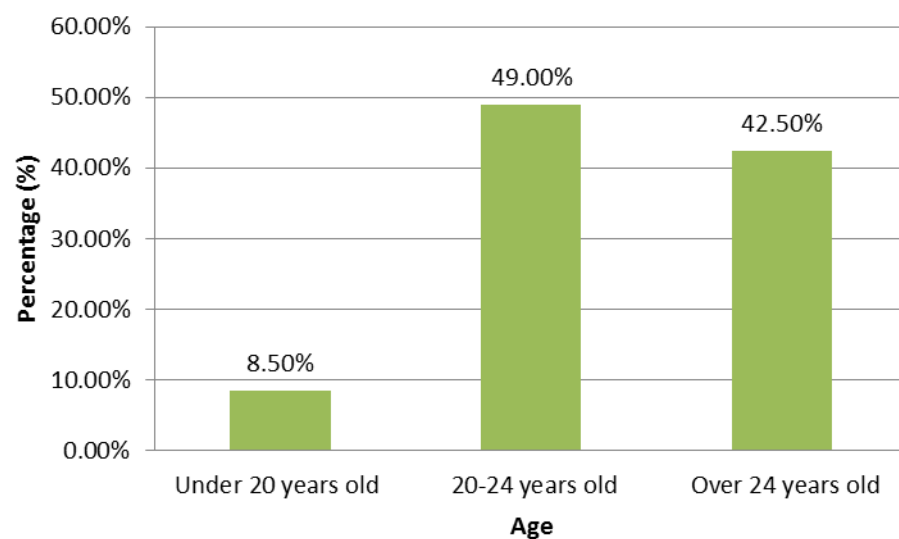


Figure 4.2. Distribution of participants by age

4.4.3 Country of origin

There were 88% participants from Asian countries. The sample generally reflects the real distribution of international students at UTAS as Asian students which were 83.3% of the total international students in UTAS in 2009 (UTAS, 2009b) . Students were from other regions, including Middle East (6%), Europe (2%), North America (1%), South America (2%), and Africa (3%).

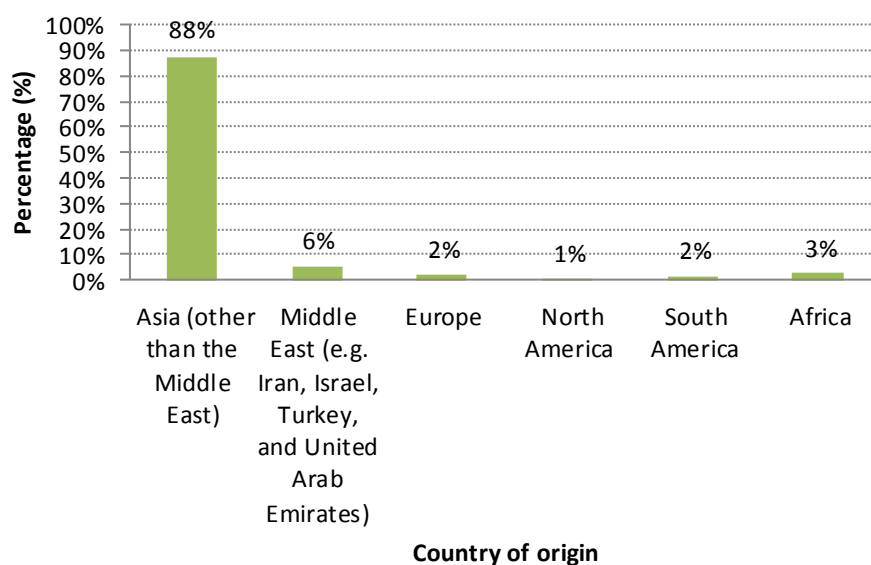


Figure 4.3. Distribution of participants by country of origin

4.4.4 Academic faculty

Figure 4.4 shows that most participants were from the Faculty of Business (37%) and Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology and Australian Maritime College (AMC) (35%). Other participants are from Faculty of Health Science (16%), Faculty of Education and Art (11%), and Faculty of law (1%).

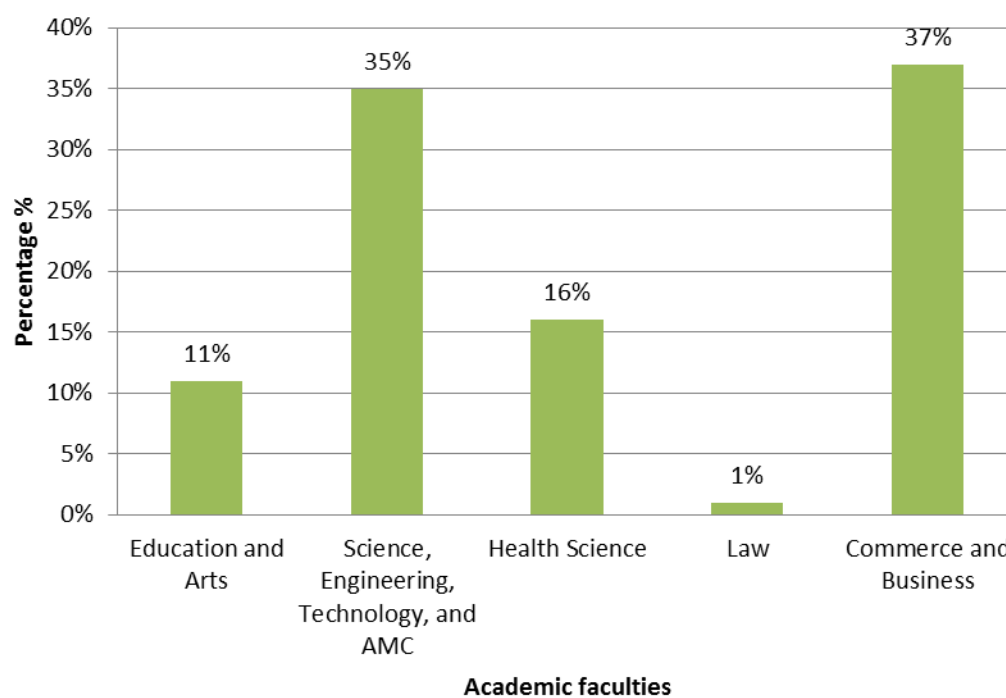


Figure 4.4. Distribution of participants by academic faculty

4.4.5 Degree currently pursuing

According to figure 4.5, 52% of participants were undergraduate students; 46% of them were postgraduate students; and 2% of them were taking other courses, such as English language, or other training course.

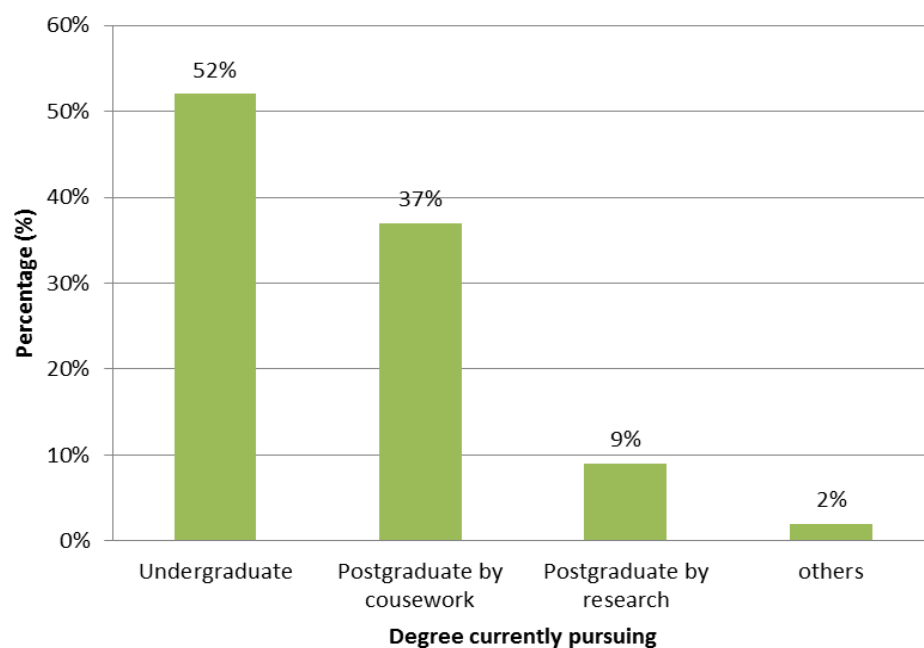


Figure 4.5. Distribution of participants by degree currently pursuing

4.4.6 Length of stay

Among 341 participants, 28% of them have been Tasmania less than 12 months, 30% have lived in Tasmania between one year and two years, 32% of participants have been in Tasmania between two to four years, and 11% of these participants have lived in Tasmania over 4 years.

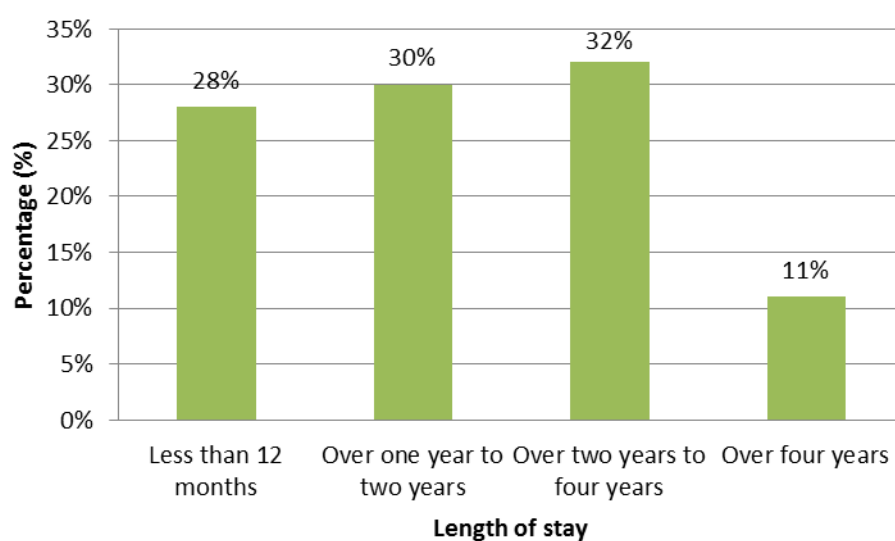


Figure 4.6. Distribution of participants by length of stay

4.4.7 English proficiency

Participants self-reported their English proficiency: 46% of them had a moderate level of English proficiency, 10% of them were excellent, 34% were good, 9% were weak, and 1% was very weak.

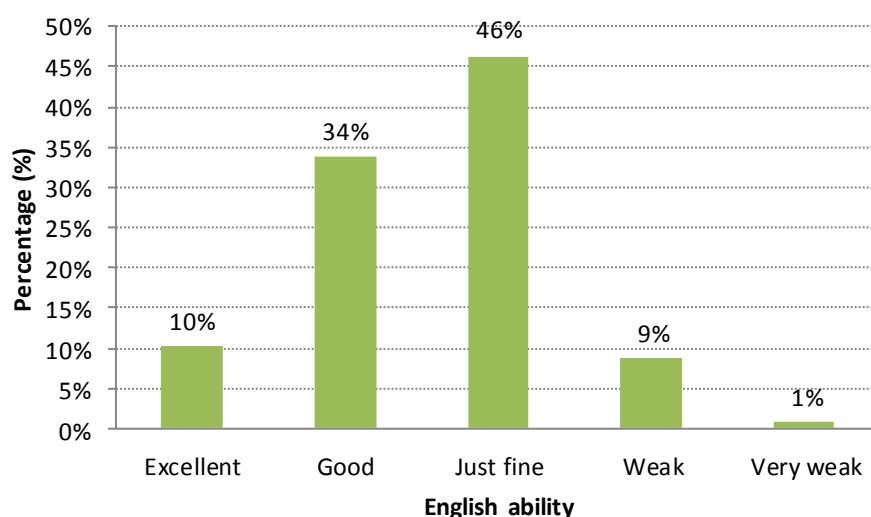


Figure 4.7. Distribution of participants by English proficiency

4.4.8 Marital status

Nearly 90% participants in this study were single. Participants who have been married (or *de facto*) without children were 7% of the sample, whereas participants married (or *de facto*) with children were 5%. Participants who divorced (or separated) were 1% of the sample.

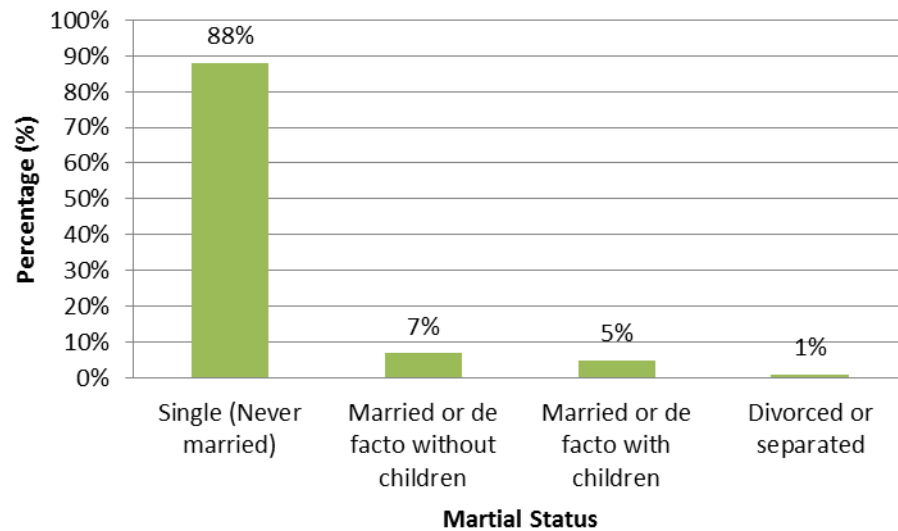


Figure 4.8. Distribution of participants by marital status

4.4.9 Type of accommodation

According to Figure 4.9, there were 87% participants living in a shared house or rental house. Other types of accommodation that participants were using in this sample include hostel (7%), homestay (7%), their own house (or their family's or relative's house) (2%).

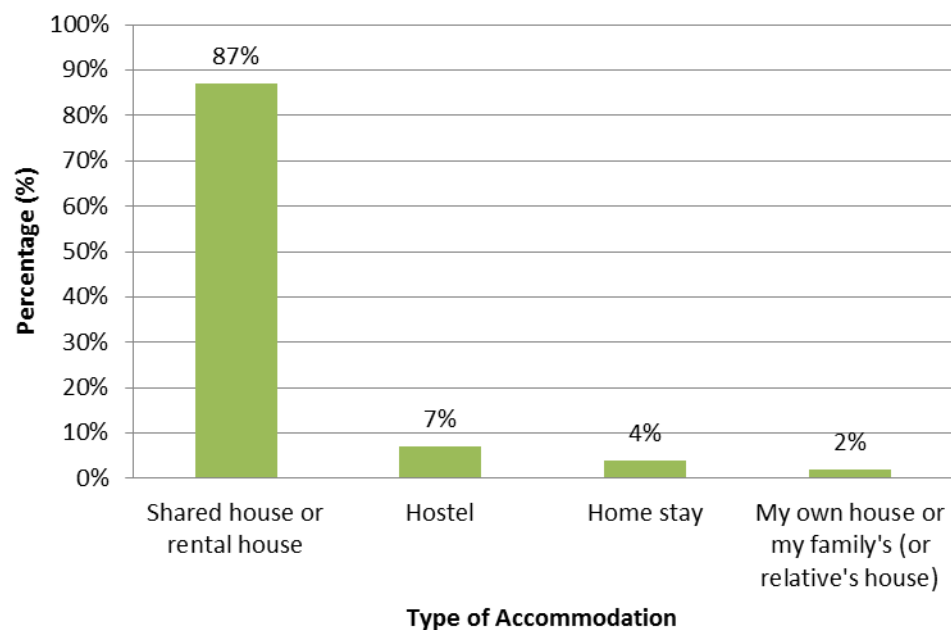


Figure 4.9. Distribution of participants by type of accommodation

4.4.10 Primary source of financial support

Figure 4.10 shows that family is the greatest source of financial support for these participants as 70% of participants were mainly supported by their family financially. Other sources of financial support for these participants include their own savings (11%), paid work (9%), and scholarship (9%).

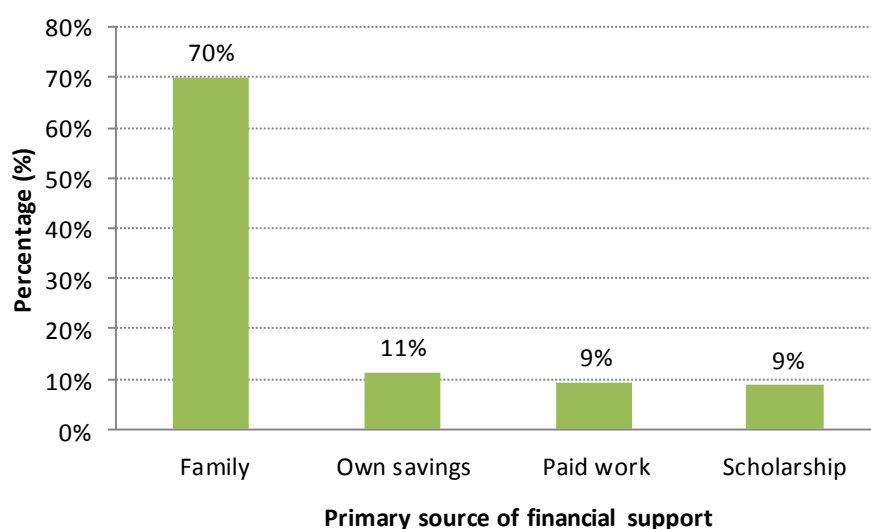


Figure 4.10. Distribution of participants by primary source of financial support

4.4.11 Ownership of car/bike

Among 341 participants, 64% of participants did not have a car (or bike), whereas 36% of them had a car (or bike).

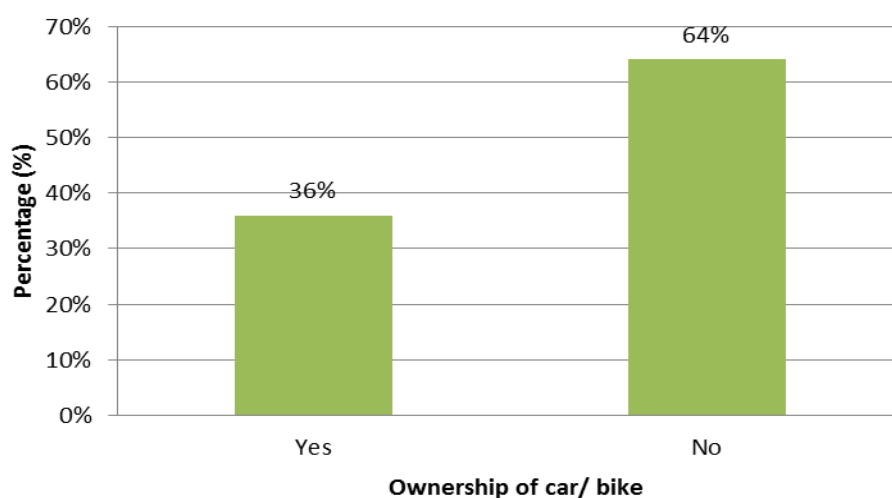


Figure 4.11. Distribution of participants by ownership of car/bike

4.4.12 Physical health

The figure 4.12 reports that most of participants' self-rated physical health conditions were good (56%); 26% of them report that their physical health conditions were excellent and 17% of their physical health conditions were just fine. Nobody had a poor or very poor physical health condition.

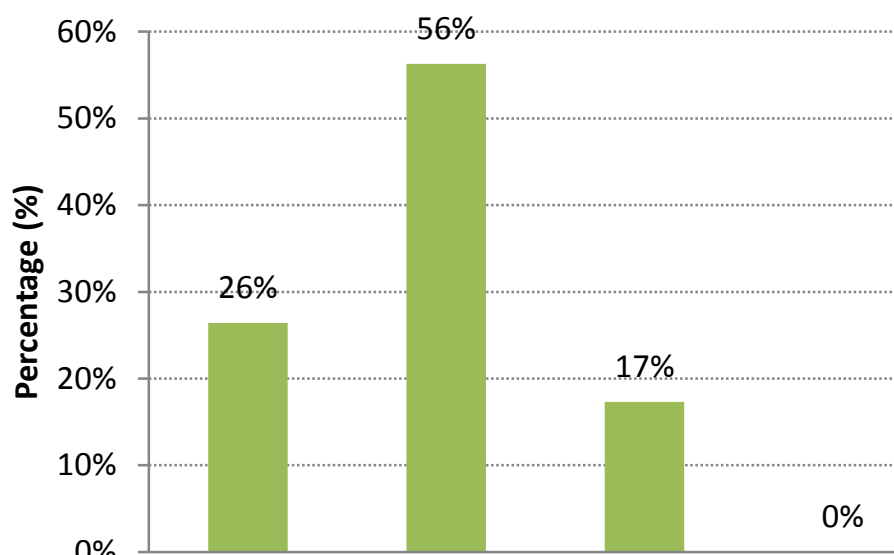


Figure 4.12. Distribution of participants by physical health

4.5 Descriptive statistics of participants' responses

Questions in Part B to Part F of the questionnaire are designed to examine participants' views and attitudes to different issues related to their health and wellbeing in Tasmania. In Part B, C, and D, participants' views to adjustment problems, racism discrimination and psychological issues are measured by a Likert scales formatted as *1=not at all, 2=a little, 3=somewhat, 4=very, and 5=extremely*. Meanwhile, a Likert scales as *1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, and 5=very often* are used to measure participants' attitudes to health behaviours and coping strategies in Part E and F. Frequencies, percentage and median of participants' responses are presented in tables in the following sections.

4.5.1 Adjustment problems

Part B of the questionnaire aims to examine participants' views on different adjustment problems. Three aspects include general living problems (Q13 - Q18):

academic experiences and socio-cultural problems are discussed in the following three sections.

4.5.1.1 General living problems

Q13 to Q18 are designed to examine participants' views with general living problems. Results of their views are presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1. Participants' views on questions Q13 to Q18

Items	Not at all		A little		Somewhat		Very		Extremely		Median
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Q13. I am satisfied with my accommodation.	10	3%	38	11%	111	33%	154	45%	28	8%	4
Q14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania	40	12%	91	27%	122	36%	59	17%	28	8%	3
Q15 I am happy with the transport system.	71	21%	79	23%	117	34%	59	17%	14	4%	3
Q16 I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania.	67	20%	95	28%	117	34%	47	14%	15	4%	3
Q17 I am satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania.	103	30%	99	29%	100	29%	30	9%	5	1.5%	2
Q18 I am safe in Tasmania.	10	3%	56	16%	148	43%	98	29%	25	7%	3

Table 4.1 indicates that participants had a high level of satisfaction with accommodation in Tasmania (Q13, Median = 4). However, they had a low level of satisfaction with job opportunities in Tasmania (Q17, Median = 2). Besides, participants' responses were divided in these four aspects: cost of living (Q14), transport system (Q15), availability of food (Q16), and safety (Q18) as the median values all equal to 3 in the four items.

4.5.1.2 Academic experiences

Q19 to Q26 were purposive for investigating participants' views to their academic experiences. Their responses to these 8 questions are presented in the Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Participants' views on questions Q19 to Q26

Items	Not at all		A little		Somewhat		Very		Extremely		Median
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Q19. I am satisfied with my English ability.	34	10%	69	20%	143	42%	72	21%	22	7%	3
Q20. I am satisfied with the academic staff.	4	1%	52	15%	135	40%	134	39%	12	4%	3
Q21. I am satisfied with the admin staff.	10	3%	43	13%	141	41%	127	37%	15	4%	3
Q22. I am satisfied with my academic performance.	11	3%	52	15%	162	48%	96	28%	11	3%	3
Q23. International students are well looked after by the university.	22	7%	70	21%	157	46%	77	23%	10	3%	3
Q24. I am familiar with the university educational system here.	14	4%	59	17%	161	47%	93	27%	9	3%	3
Q25. I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania.	15	4%	54	16%	158	46%	100	29%	9	3%	3
Q26. I feel included in my class.	20	6%	49	14%	150	44%	105	31%	7	2%	3

According to Table 4.2, participants had divided views on their English ability (Q19, Median=3). Also, their views were divided on: satisfaction with the academic staff (Q20), the administrative staff (Q21), academic performance (Q22), university services (Q23 and Q25), and familiarity with Australian educational system (Q24).

4.5.1.3 Socio-cultural problems

Q27 to Q31 in the questionnaire are questions which were designed to investigate participants' views to socio-cultural problems. The results were presented in the Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Participants' views on questions Q27 to Q31

Items	Not at all		A little		Somewhat		Very		Extremely		Median
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Q27 I am used to the Australian accent.	18	5%	79	23%	156	46%	75	22%	12	4%	3
Q28 I make friends with local people easily.	39	11%	89	26%	135	40%	65	19%	11	3%	3
Q29 I have many friends at the university.	11	3%	69	20%	151	44%	90	26%	16	5%	3
Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	35	10%	100	29%	135	40%	58	17%	10	3%	3
Q31 Local people want to know about my culture.	46	14%	91	27%	129	38%	63	19%	10	3%	3

Table 4.3 shows that participants' views were divided on these five items (Median =3), including Australian accent (Q27), making friends (Q28 and Q29), and interaction with local people and communities (Q30 and Q31).

4.5.2 Racism discrimination

The two questions Q32 and Q33 focus on examining participants' views on racism discrimination in Tasmania. The participants' responses to the two questions are shown in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4. Participants' views on questions Q32 to Q33

Items	Not at all		A little		somewhat		Very		Extremely		Median
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Q32. Racism occurs in Tasmania.	25	7%	81	24%	127	37%	78	23%	27	8%	3
Q33. I am treated unfairly because of my cultural background.	67	20%	96	28%	133	39%	29	9%	14	4%	3

Table 4.4 indicates that participant' views on racism discrimination were divided (Median =3, Q32 and Q33).

4.5.3 Psychological issues

These 7 questions (Q34 to Q40) were designed to examine international students' views to psychological issues, including homesickness (Q34), anxiety (Q35 and Q40), loneliness (Q36 and Q37), and depression (Q38 and Q39).

Table 4.5. Participants' views on questions Q34 to Q40

Items	Not at all		A little		somewhat		Very		Extremel y		Median
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Q34. I feel homesick	54	16%	116	34%	108	32%	41	12%	20	6%	2
Q35. I feel upset easily.	82	24%	130	38%	94	28%	28	8%	5	2%	2
Q36. I feel lonely in Tasmania.	70	21%	130	38%	89	26%	38	11%	11	3%	2
Q37 It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.	87	26%	111	33%	98	29%	32	9%	10	3%	2
Q38. I feel tired easily.	53	16%	127	37%	103	30%	44	13%	11	3%	2
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	9	3%	60	18%	152	45%	97	28%	20	6%	3
Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.	43	13%	89	26%	143	42%	49	14%	14	4%	3

According to Table 4.5, participants had a low level of homesickness (Median=2, Q34) and loneliness (Median=2, Q36 and Q37). However, in terms of anxiety, participants' responses to Q35 tended to be low (Median = 2), while their views were divided on Q40 (Median=3). Similarly, participants' responses to Q38 showed that they had a low level of depression (Median =2), while their views were divided on Q39 (Median=3).

4.5.4 Health behaviours

Health behaviours were investigated by the following 7 items, which include food (Q41-Q44), smoking (Q45), alcohol (Q46), and physical exercises (Q47).

Table 4.6. Participants' attitudes on questions Q41 to Q47

Items	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Very Often		Median
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Q41. How often do you eat fast food?	28	8%	136	40%	139	41%	31	9%	7	2%	3
Q42. How often do you eat vegetables?	1	1%	22	7%	90	26%	151	44%	77	23%	4
Q43. How often do you eat fruits?	7	2%	30	9%	97	28%	139	41%	68	20%	4
Q44. How often do you skip breakfast?	56	16%	65	19%	98	29%	74	22%	46	14%	3
Q45. How often do you smoke?	255	75%	28	8%	30	9%	20	6%	7	2%	1
Q46. How often do you drink alcohol?	114	33%	130	38%	74	22%	17	5%	4	1%	2
Q47. How often do you have exercises?	15	4%	107	31%	118	35%	80	24%	21	6%	3

Table 4.6 showed that participants' consumption of vegetables (Q42, Median=4) and fruit (Q43, Median=4) significantly, and they also had a low frequency of drinking alcohol (Q46, Median=2) and very low frequency of smoking (Q45, Median=1). However, their attitudes were divided on taking fast food (Q41, Median=3), skipping breakfast (Q44, Median=3), and doing exercises (Q37, Median=3).

4.5.5 Coping strategies

The 13 questions were designed to examine participants' attitudes to coping strategies: Q48 to Q52 focus on problems-focused strategies, and Q53 to Q60 are on emotion-focused strategies (Q53 – Q60).

Table 4.7. Responses' attitudes to Q48-Q60

Items	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Very Often		Median
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Q48. Make a plan for my next steps	5	2%	45	13%	123	36%	129	38%	37	11%	3
Q49. Take a direct approach to deal with the problem	2	1%	27	8%	132	39%	143	42%	32	9%	4
Q50. Focus on solving the problems, and put other things aside if necessary	1	1%	34	10%	130	38%	145	43%	29	9%	4
Q51. Wait for the right time to deal with the problems	13	4%	49	14%	144	42%	114	33%	19	6%	3
Q52. Try to get advice from someone on what to do	3	1%	32	9%	142	42%	126	37%	36	11%	3
Q53. Try to get sympathetic understanding from someone	14	4%	87	26%	139	41%	84	25%	14	4%	3
Q54. Try to vent my feeling	10	3%	75	22%	168	49%	72	21%	11	3%	3
Q55. Reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem	27	8%	95	28%	152	45%	57	17%	3	1%	3
Q56. Force myself to do other things to take my mind off the problem	24	7%	67	20%	154	45%	74	22%	18	5%	3
Q57. Try to look at it from a positive way	7	2%	24	7%	122	36%	139	41%	47	14%	4
Q58. Pretend that it hasn't really happened.	78	23%	94	28%	115	34%	44	13%	7	2%	2
Q59. Accept the reality	6	2%	16	5%	117	34%	148	43%	51	15%	4
Q60. Try to support in my religion	67	20%	57	17%	100	29%	82	24%	33	10%	3

According to Table 4.7, within problem-focused coping, active coping (Q49, Median=4) and suppression (Q50, Median=4) were two strategies most frequently used by the participants. However, participants' attitudes were divided to other strategies, including planning (Q48, Median=3), restraint (Q51, Median=3), seeking support from instrument reasons (Q52, Median=3). Meanwhile, within emotion-focused coping, positive reappraisal (Q57, Median=4) and acceptance (Q59, Median=4) were two most frequently used by the participants, while denial (Q58,

Median=2) was the least used. Participants' attitudes were divided to these strategies: seeking support for emotional reasons (Q53, Median=3), venting of emotion (Q54, Median=3), behavioural disengagement (Q55, Median=3), mental disengagement (Q56, Median=3), and religion (Q60, Median=3).

4.6 Factors that influence international students' satisfaction and their wellbeing

In the above section 4.5, participants' views and attitudes towards different aspects of their life in Tasmania were presented in tables with descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, and median values. In this section, participants' demographic factors are taken into consideration and find out if these factors significantly influence their views and attitudes. Given the limited scope of this research, only factors that are identified to be most significant to international students' health and wellbeing are examined. Thus, four demographic factors including gender, age, length of stay, and English level were selected. Other three factors as types of accommodation, source of financial support, and ownership of car (or bike) are also selected to be examined the relationship with those specific variables. In this study, types of accommodation is only analysed for significant relationship with participants' satisfaction with accommodation; source of financial support is only examined with participants' level of financial worries; and ownership of car (or bike) is only examined with their satisfaction with transport in Tasmania.

As stated before, non-parametric tests are utilized because samples in this study are distributed abnormally. Two non-parametric tests: Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test as inferential statistics analysis method are conducted. Mann-Whitney U tests are utilized to find out statistically significant differences between two groups of one variable (such as gender, and ownership of car or bike). Effect size r is calculated to quantify the size of the differences. Cohen (1988) suggests that $r = .1$ could be considered small; $r = .3$, could be considered medium, and $r = .5$ could be considered large. Kruskal-Wallis tests are conducted to compare three or more groups of a variable (such as age, length of stay, English level, types of accommodation, sources of financial support) to examine if there are statistically

significant differences among these groups. Effect size η^2 is calculated to qualify the significance of the difference. According to Cohen (1988), $\eta^2 = .010$ means the effect size could be small, $\eta^2 = .059$ means the effect size could be considered medium, and $\eta^2 = .138$ means the effect size could be large. If a significant difference is found out by a Kruskal-Wallis test, a *post hoc* Mann Whitney *U* test is conducted further to identify which pair of groups has significant differences.

With PASW (Version 18), test results including the Chi-square value (χ^2), degree of freedom (*df*), asymptotic significance, Effect size η^2 , and mean rank derived by Kruskal Wallis test, and Mann-Whitney *U*, Wilcoxon *W*, *Z*, and asymptotic significance derived by Mann Whitney *U* test are shown in tables. It is noted that only significant results are presented.

4.6.1 By gender

Gender as one of the demographic factors is selected as an independent variable to be examined if it has significant influences on participants' views to adjustment problems (Q13 to Q31), racism discrimination (Q32 and Q33), psychological issues (Q34 to Q40), and if it significantly affect their attitudes to health behaviours (Q41 to Q47), and coping strategies (Q48 to Q60). Since the variable of gender has two subgroups: male and female, Mann-Whitney *U* tests are used to find if males and females have significant differences between these two groups. Results indicated that participants' gender significantly influenced their satisfaction with accommodation conditions (Q13) and English ability (Q19). Besides, males and females had different attitudes on eating vegetables (Q42) and fruits (Q43), skipping breakfast (Q44), smoking (Q45), and drinking alcohol (Q46). Within coping strategies, they have different attitudes to positive reappraisal (Q57).

4.6.1.1 Satisfaction with accommodation

The table 4.8 indicates that participants' views on accommodation were significantly different by gender ($p = .014 < .050$). Male participants (*Mean Rank* = 182.77) were more satisfied with their accommodation than female participants (*Mean Rank* = 158.14). The effect size is small ($r = -.15$).

Table 4.8. Results of Mann-Whitney U test on Q13 - I am satisfied with my accommodation by gender

Q1 Gender		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Q13. I am satisfied with my accommodation.	Male	178	182.77	32533.50
	Female	163	158.14	25777.50
	Total	341		
Mann-Whitney $U = 12411.5$, $z = -2.469$, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .014, $r = -.15$				

4.6.1.2 Satisfaction with English ability

According to Table 4.9, participants' satisfaction with their English abilities were significantly different between male and female ($p = .007 < .050$). Male participants ($Mean Rank = 183.56$) were more satisfied with their English ability than female participants ($Mean Rank = 156.15$). The effect size is small ($r = -.15$).

Table 4.9. Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q19 – I am satisfied with my English ability by gender

	Q1. Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank
Q19. I am satisfied with my English ability.	Male	178	183.56	32673
	Female	162	156.15	25297
	Total	340		
Mann-Whitney $U = 12094$, $z = -2.697$, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .007, $r = -.15$				

4.6.1.3 Eating vegetables

Table 4.10 shows that participants' attitudes to eating vegetables were significantly different between males and females ($p = .000 < .050$). Female participants ($Mean Rank = 192.85$) had vegetables more often than males ($Mean Rank = 150.99$). The effect size is small ($r = -.22$).

Table 4.10. Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q42 – How often do you eat vegetables by gender

	Q1. Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank
Q42. How often do you eat vegetables	Male	178	150.99	26876
	Female	163	192.85	31535
	Total	341		
Mann-Whitney $U = 10945$, $z = -4.169$, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .000, $r = -.22$				

4.6.1.4 Eating fruits

The result of Table 4.11 indicates that there was a significant difference in attitudes to eating fruits between males and females ($p=.000 < .050$). Female participants (*Mean Rank* = 192.27) ate fruits were more often than males (*Mean Rank* = 151.53). The effect size is small ($r= -.22$).

Table 4.11. Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q43 – How often do you eat fruits by gender

	Q1. Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank
Q43. How often do you eat fruits?	Male	178	151.53	26971.5
	Female	163	192.27	31339.5
	Total	341		
Mann- Whitney $U = 11040.5$, $z = -4.017$, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .000, $r = -.22$				

4.6.1.5 Skipping breakfast

The result of Table 4.12 indicates that male and female participants had significant different attitudes to skipping breakfast ($p=.013 < .050$). Male participants (*Mean Rank* = 182.24) skipped breakfast were more often than females (*Mean Rank* = 156.47). The effect size is small ($r= -.22$).

Table 4.12. Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q44 – How often do you skip your breakfast by gender

	Q1. Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank
Q44. How often do you skip your breakfast?	Male	178	182.24	32438.5
	Female	161	156.47	25191.5
	Total	341		
Mann- Whitney $U = 12150.5$, $z = -2.479$, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .013, $r = -.22$				

4.6.1.6 Smoking

Table 4.13 shows male and female participants had significantly different attitudes to smoking ($p=.001 < .050$). Male participants smoked more often (*Mean rank* = 183.53) than female participants (*Mean rank* = 156.18). The effect size is small ($r= -.18$).

Table 4.13. Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q45 – How often do you smoke by gender

	Q1. Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank
Q45. How often do you smoke?	Male	178	183.53	32668.5
	Female	162	156.18	25301.5
	Total	340		
Mann-Whitney U = 12098.5, z = -3.374, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .001, r = -.18				

4.6.1.7 Drinking alcohol

Table 4.14. Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q46 – How often do you drink alcohol by gender indicates that males and females had significantly different attitudes to drinking alcohol ($p = .003 < .050$). Result shows that male participants (*Mean rank* = 184.17) drank alcohol more often than females (*Mean rank* = 154.34). The effect size is small ($r = .16$).

Table 4.14. Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q46 – How often do you drink alcohol by gender

	Q1. Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank
Q46. How often do you drink alcohol?	Male	178	184.17	32782
	Female	161	154.34	24848
	Total	339		
Mann-Whitney U = 11807, z = -2.958, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .003, r = -.16				

4.6.1.8 Positive reappraisal

Table 4.15 indicates that male and female participants had significantly different attitudes to positive reappraisal ($p = .049 < .050$). Female participants (*Mean rank* = 180.21) used this strategy of positive reappraisal more often than male participants (*Mean rank* = 160.55). The effect size is small ($r = .011$).

Table 4.15. Result of Mann-Whitney U test of Q57 – Try to look at it from a positive way by gender

	Q1. Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank
Q57. Try to look at it from a positive way.	Male	176	160.55	28256.50
	Female	163	180.21	29373.50
	Total	339		
Mann-Whitney U = 12680.5, z = -1.965, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .049, r = .011				

4.6.2 By age groups

Age as one of the demographic factors is also selected as an independent variable to be examined if it has significant influences on participants' views to adjustment problems (Q13 to Q31), racism discrimination (Q32 and Q33), psychological issues (Q34 to Q40), and if it significantly affect their attitudes to health behaviours (Q41 to Q47), and coping strategies (Q48 to Q60). In this study, participant's age was divided into three groups: less than 20 years old, 20-24 years old, and over 24 years old. Thus, Kruskal-Wallis test is selected to examine if there are significant differences among these three groups. Results indicated that participants' age significantly influenced their views on safety (Q18), and inclusiveness in class (Q26); satisfaction with academic performance (Q22), and university services (Q25). Also, participants at different age groups had significantly different attitudes on eating vegetables (Q42) and fruits (Q43). Within coping strategies, they had different attitudes to taking a direct approach (Q49).

4.6.2.1 Safety

Table 4.16 indicates that participants' views to safety were significantly different between those who were over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 181.46), between 20 to 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 163.19), and under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 140.60), $p=.048$. The effect size is small ($\eta^2=.030$).

Table 4.16. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q18 – I feel safe in Tasmania by age

	Q2. Age	N	Mean Rank
Q18. I feel safe in Tasmania.	Under 20	29	140.60
	20-24	165	163.19
	Over 24	143	181.46
	Total	337	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 8.509$, $df = 2$, Asymp. sig. = .048, $\eta^2 = .030$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups had significantly different views on safety. The tests found that participants who are “under 20 years old” and “over 24 years old” have significantly different views on safety (Mann-Whitney $U = 1540$, $z = -2.335$, $p = .020 < .050$). Participants what are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 90.23) felt safer than those who are under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 68.10). The effect size is small ($r = .18$).

4.6.2.2 Satisfaction with academic performance

Table 4.17 indicates that participants who are at different ages had significant different level of satisfaction with their academic performance ($p = .014 < .050$): participants who are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 183.25), those who are under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 155.02) and between 20 and 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 154.34). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .025$).

Table 4.17. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q22 – I am satisfied with my academic performance by age

	Q2. Age	N	Mean Rank
Q22. I am satisfied with my academic performance.	Under 20	29	155.02
	20-24	164	154.34
	Over 24	139	183.25
	Total	332	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 8.509$, $df = 2$, Asymp.sig. = .014, $\eta^2 = .025$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly difference in satisfaction with their academic performance. Results showed that participants who are “20-24 years old” and “over 24 years old” had significantly

different level of satisfaction with their academic performance (Mann- Whitney $U = 9406.5$, $z = -2.835$, $p = .005 < .050$). Participants' who are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 166.33) were more satisfied with their academic performance than those who are between 20 to 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 139.86). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .026$).

4.6.2.3 Views on being well informed about the university

Table 4.18 indicates that participant' views on this issue were significantly different between those who are under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 126.57), 20 -24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 167.63), and over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 178.00). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .023$).

Table 4.18. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q25 – I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania by age

	Q2. Age	N	Mean Rank
Q25. I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania.	Under 20	29	126.57
	20-24	164	167.63
	Over 24	143	178.00
	Total	336	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 7.838$, $df = 2$, Asymp.sig. = .020, $\eta^2 = .023$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly difference in views on being well informed about the university. The test found that:

- participants who are “under 20 years old” and “over 24” had significantly different views on being well informed about the university (Mann- Whitney $U = 1423.5$, $z = -2.898$, $p = .004 < .050$). Participants who are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 91.05) were more positive to this issue than those who are under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 64.09). The effect size is small ($r = -.22$); and
- Participants who are between 20 to 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 100.45) were more positive to this issue than those who are under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 77.48), Mann- Whitney $U = 1812$, $z = -2.178$, $p = .029 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.12$).

4.6.2.4 Inclusiveness in class

According to Table 4.19, participants' views on inclusiveness in class were significantly different ($p = .000 < .050$) between those were at under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 233.83), 20-24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 160.18), and over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 158.68). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .056$).

Table 4.19. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q26 – I feel included in my class by age

	Q2. Age	N	Mean Rank
Q26. I feel included in my class.	Under 20	29	233.83
	20-24	162	160.18
	Over 24	140	158.68
	Total	331	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 18.342$, $df = 2$, Asymp.sig. = .000, $\eta^2 = .056$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significant differences in views on inclusiveness in class. The test found that:

- Participants who are “under 20 years old” and “20- 24 years old” had significantly different views on inclusiveness in class (Mann- Whitney $U = 1316.5$, $z = -4.026$, $p = .000 < .050$). Participants who are under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 131.60) felt more included in class than those who are between 20 to 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 89.63). The effect size is medium ($r = -.30$); and
- Participants who are under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 117.22) felt more included in class than those who are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 78.33), Mann- Whitney $U = 1095.5$, $z = -4.184$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is medium ($r = -.32$).

4.6.2.5 Eating vegetables

According to Table 4.20, participants' attitudes in eating vegetables were significantly different ($p = .017 < .050$) between those are at under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 170.81), 20-24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 157.03), and over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 187.12). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .025$).

Table 4.20. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q42– How often do you eat vegetables by age

	Q2. Age	N	Mean Rank
Q42. How often do you eat vegetables	Under 20	29	170.81
	20-24	167	157.03
	Over 24	145	187.12
	Total	341	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 8.189$, $df = 2$, Asymp.sig. = .017, $\eta^2 = .025$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly difference in attitudes in eating vegetables. Results show that participants who are “20- 24 years old” and “over 24 years old” had significantly different attitudes in eating vegetables (Mann- Whitney $U = 9978$, $z = -2.853$, $p = .004 < .050$). Participants who are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 171.19) ate vegetables more often than those who are between 20 to 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 143.75). The effect size is medium ($r = -.16$).

4.6.2.6 Eating fruits

According to Table 4.21, participants’ attitudes in eating fruits are significantly different ($p = .000$) between those are at under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 150.64), 20-24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 150.79), and over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 198.34). The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = .063$).

Table 4.21. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q43– How often do you eat fruits by age

	Q2. Age	N	Mean Rank
Q43. How often do you eat fruits	Under 20	29	150.64
	20-24	167	150.79
	Over 24	145	198.34
	Total	341	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 21.551$, $df = 2$, Asymp.sig. = .000, $\eta^2 = .063$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly difference in attitudes in eating fruits. The test found that:

- There was significantly different between participants who are “20-24 years old” and “over 24 years old” (Mann- Whitney $U = 8728.5$, $z = -4.482$, $p=.000<.050$). Participants who are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 179.80) ate fruits more often than those who are between 20 to 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 136.27). The effect size is small ($r=-.25$); and
- Participants who are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 91.54) ate fruits more often than those who are under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 67.29), Mann-Whitney $U = 1516.5$, $z = -2.531$, $p=.011 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r= -.20$).

4.6.2.7 Taking a direct approach

According to Table 4.22, participants’ attitudes in taking a direct approach to deal with the problems are significantly different ($p=.043<.050$) between those are at under 20 years old (*Mean Rank* = 159.74), 20-24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 157.70), and over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 183.01). The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 =.019$).

Table 4.22. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q49 – Take a direct approach to deal with the problems by age

	Q2. Age	N	Mean Rank
Q49. Take a direct approach to deal with the problems.	Under 20	29	159.74
	20-24	166	157.70
	Over 24	141	183.01
	Total	336	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 6.310$, $df = 2$, Asymp.sig. = .043, $\eta^2 =.019$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly difference in attitudes in taking a direct approach to deal with the problems. Results indicate that there was significantly different between participants who are “20-24 years old” and “over 24 years old” (Mann- Whitney $U = 9923.5$, $z = -2.483$, $p=.013<.050$). Participants who are over 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 166.62) tended to take direct approach to deal with the problems than those who are between 20 to 24 years old (*Mean Rank* = 143.28). The effect size is small ($r=-.14$).

4.6.3 By length of stay

Length of stay in Tasmania is selected as an independent variable to be examined if it has significant influences on participants' views to adjustment problems (Q13 to Q31), racism discrimination (Q32 and Q33), psychological issues (Q34 to Q40), and if significantly affect their attitudes to health behaviours (Q41 to Q47), and coping strategies (Q48 to Q60). In this study, participants' lengths of stay in Tasmania were divided into four groups: less than 12 months, over one to two years, over two to four years, and over four years. Kruskal-Wallis test is selected to examine significant differences among these four groups. Results indicated that participants' lengths of stay in Tasmania significantly influenced their satisfaction with transport in Tasmania (Q15), job opportunities in Tasmania (Q17), opportunities to participant in local activities (Q30); and their views on racism discrimination (Q32 and Q33), homesickness (Q34), depression (Q38). Also, participants with different lengths of stay in Tasmania had different attitudes on eating fast food (Q41), skipping breakfast (Q44), and having exercises (Q47).

4.6.3.1 Satisfaction with transport system

Table 4.23 indicates that there were significant differences in satisfaction with transport in Tasmania ($p = .037 < .050$) among participants who have been Tasmania for more than four years (*Mean rank* = 194.11), those who have been Tasmania between two years and four years (*Mean Rank* = 161.40), who have been here between one year and two year (*Mean Rank* = 186.22), and who have been here for less than twelve months (*Mean rank* = 155.12). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .024$).

Table 4.23. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q15 – I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania by length of stay in Tasmania

	Q6. Length of stay in Tasmania (up to now):	N	Mean Rank
Q15. I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania.	Less than 12 months	94	155.12
	Over one year to two years	101	186.22
	Over two years to four years	109	161.40
	Over four years	36	194.11
	Total	340	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 8.468$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .037, $\eta^2 = .024$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significant differences in satisfaction with transport in Tasmania. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann-Whitney $U = 3878$, $z = -2.285$, $p = .022 < .050$). Participants who have been Tasmania for over one year to two years (*Mean Rank* = 106.60) were more satisfied with transport in Tasmania than those who have been here less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 88.76). The effect size is small ($r = -.16$); and
- Participants who have been in Tasmania over four years (*Mean Rank* = 76.60) were more satisfied with transport than those who have been less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 61.25), Mann-Whitney $U = 1292.5$, $z = -2.163$, $p = .031 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.15$).

4.6.3.2 Satisfaction with job opportunities in Tasmania

Table 4.24 indicates that there were significantly different levels of satisfaction with job opportunities in Tasmania ($p = .009 < .050$) between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” (*Mean Rank* = 155.30), those who have been Tasmania for “over one year to two years” (*Mean Rank* = 195.15), those who have been here for “over two years to four years” (*Mean Rank* = 163.05), and who have been here for “over four years” (*Mean Rank* = 150.61). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .034$).

Table 4.24. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q17 – I am satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania by length of stay

	Q6. Length of stay in Tasmania	N	Mean Rank
Q17. I am satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania.	Less than 12 months	92	155.30
	Over one year to two years	99	195.15
	Over two years to four years	109	163.05
	Over four years	37	150.61
	Total	337	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 11.613$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .009, $\eta^2 = .034$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly differences in satisfaction with job opportunities in Tasmania. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann- Whitney $U = 3466$, $z = -2.971$, $p = .003 < .050$). Participants who have been in Tasmania for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 106.99) were more satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania than those who have been here less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 84.17) The effect size is small ($r = -.22$);
- Participants who have been here for one to two years (*More than* = 114.76) were more satisfied with job opportunities than those who have been here for two to four years (*Mean Rank* = 95.18, Mann- Whitney $U = 4379.5$, $z = -2.434$, $p = .015 < .050$). The effect size is small ($r = -.17$); and
- Participants who have been here for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 73.40) were more satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania than those who have been here for over four years (*Mean Rank* = 55.39, Mann- Whitney $U = 1346.5$, $z = -2.463$, $p = .014 < .050$). The effect size is small ($r = -.21$).

4.6.3.3 Opportunities to participant in local activities

Table 4.25 indicates that participants’ views on opportunities to participate in local activities were significantly different ($p = .025 < .050$) between participants who have been Tasmania less than twelve months (*Mean Rank* = 145.68), those who have been here for one year to two years (*Mean Rank* = 171.43), those who have been here for two years to four years (*Mean Rank* = 184.27), and those who have been here for four years (*Mean Rank* = 180.24). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .028$).

Table 4.25. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q30 – I have many friends at the university by length of stay

	Q6. Length of stay in Tasmania	N	Mean Rank
Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Less than 12 months	92	145.68
	Over one year to two years	101	171.43
	Over two years to four years	109	184.27
	Over four years	36	180.24
	Total	338	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 9.325$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .025, $\eta^2 = .028$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on having opportunities to participant in local activities. The test found that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann-Whitney $U = 3922.5$, $z = -1.967$, $p = .049 < .050$). Participants who have been here for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 104.16) had more opportunities to participate in local activities than those who have been here less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 89.14). The effect size is small ($r = -.14$); and
- Participants who have been here for two to four years (*Mean Rank* = 111.60) had more opportunities to participate in local activities than those who have been here less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 88.44, Mann-Whitney $U = 3858.5$, $z = -2.961$, $p = .003 < .050$). The effect size is small ($r = -.21$).

4.6.3.4 Racism occurs in Tasmania

According to Table 4.26, participants’ views on “racism occurs in Tasmania” had significantly different ($p = .000 < .050$) between participants who have been Tasmania for “over four years” (*Mean Rank* = 189.72), those who have been here for “over two years to four years” (*Mean Rank* = 182.02), those who have been here for “over one year to two years” (*Mean Rank* = 181.78), and those who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” (*Mean Rank* = 133.80). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .056$).

Table 4.26. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q32 – Racism occurs in Tasmania by Length of stay

	Q6. Length of stay in Tasmania	N	Mean Rank
Q32. Racism occurs in Tasmania.	Less than 12 months	93	133.80
	Over one year to two years	101	181.78
	Over two years to four years	108	182.02
	Over four years	36	189.72
	Total	338	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 18.833$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .000, $\eta^2 = .056$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on occurrence of racism in Tasmania. Results indicated that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann-Whitney $U = 3388.5$, $z = -3.475$, $p = .001 < .050$). Participants who have been here for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 110.45) were more inclined to consider that racism occurs in Tasmania than those who have been less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 83.44). The effect size is small ($r = -.25$);
- Participants who have been here for two to four years (*Mean Rank* = 114.61) were more positive than those who have been here for less than 12 month (*Mean Rank* = 85.20). Mann-Whitney $U = 3552.5$, $z = -3.733$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.26$); and
- Participants who have been here for over four years (*Mean Rank* = 80.08) were more positive to this issue than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 59.16), Mann-Whitney $U = 1131$, $z = -2.962$, $p = .003 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.26$).

4.6.3.5 Unfair treatment because of cultural background

Table 4.27 shows that participants’ views on unfair treatment because of their cultural background were significantly different ($p = .022 < .050$) between those who have been Tasmania for over four years (*Mean Rank* = 192.79), those who have been here for over two years to four years (*Mean Rank* = 180.23), participants who have been here for one year to two years (*Mean Rank* = 172.90), and those who

have been here less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 146.03). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .029$).

Table 4.27. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q33 –I am treated unfairly because of my cultural background by Length of stay

	Q6. Length of stay in Tasmania	N	Mean Rank
Q33. I am treated unfairly because of my cultural background.	Less than 12 months	93	146.03
	Over one year to two years	101	172.90
	Over two years to four years	109	180.23
	Over four years	36	192.79
	Total	339	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 9.671$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .022, $\eta^2 = .029$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on unfair treatment caused by cultural background:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann-Whitney $U = 3939.5$, $z = -2.030$, $p = .042 < .050$). Participants who have been here for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 105.00) had more experiences than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 89.36). The effect size is small ($r = -.15$);
- Participants who have been here for two to four years (*Mean Rank* = 110.57) had more experiences than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 90.87). Mann-Whitney $U = 4079.5$, $z = -2.489$, $p = .013 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.18$); and
- Participants who have been here for over four years (*Mean Rank* = 78.42) had more experiences than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 59.81) Mann-Whitney $U = 1191$, $z = -2.655$, $p = .008 < .023$. The effect size is small ($r = -.23$).

4.6.3.6 Homesickness

Table 4.28 shows that participants’ views on homesickness were significantly different ($p = .040 < .050$) between those who have been Tasmania for over four years (*Mean Rank* = 174.73), those who have been here for over two years to four years

(Mean Rank = 174.44), participants who have been here for one year to two years (Mean Rank = 184.73), and those who have been here less than 12 months (Mean Rank = 147.08). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .025$).

Table 4.28. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q34 – I feel homesick by Length of stay

	Q6. Length of stay in Tasmania	N	Mean Rank
Q34. I feel homesick.	Less than 12 months	93	147.08
	Over one year to two years	100	184.73
	Over two years to four years	109	174.44
	Over four years	37	174.73
	Total	339	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 8.306$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .040, $\eta^2 = .025$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on homesickness.

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann-Whitney $U = 3624.5$, $z = -2.758$, $p = .006 < .050$). Participants who have been here for one to two years (Mean Rank = 107.26) felt more homesick than those who have been here for less than 12 months (Mean Rank = 85.97). The effect size is small ($r = -.15$).
- Participants who have been here for two to four years (Mean Rank = 109.03) felt more homesick than those who have been here for less than 12 months (Mean Rank = 92.67), Mann-Whitney $U = 4247.5$, $z = -2.074$, $p = .038 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.18$).

4.6.3.7 I feel tired easily

Table 4.29 shows that participants' views on “I feel tired easily” were significantly different ($p = .033 < .050$) between those who have been Tasmania for over four years (Mean Rank = 177.91), those who have been here for over two years to four years (Mean Rank = 177.83), participants who have been here for one year to two years (Mean Rank = 180.01), and those who have been here less than 12 months (Mean Rank = 145.22). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .026$).

Table 4.29. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q38 – I feel tired easily Length of stay

	Q6. Length of stay in Tasmania	N	Mean Rank
Q38. I feel tired easily.	Less than 12 months	93	145.22
	Over one year to two years	99	180.01
	Over two years to four years	109	177.83
	Over four years	37	177.91
	Total	338	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 8.715$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .033, $\eta^2 = .026$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on “I feel tired easily”.

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann-Whitney $U = 3678.5$, $z = -2.514$, $p = .012 < .050$). Participants who have been here for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 105.84) were more easily to feel tired than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 86.55). The effect size is small ($r = -.18$); and
- Participants who have been here for two to four years (*Mean Rank* = 110.93) were more easily to feel tired than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 90.45). Mann-Whitney $U = 4041$, $z = -2.615$, $p = .009 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.18$).

4.6.3.8 Eating fast food

Table 4.30 indicates that participants’ attitudes on eating fast food were significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania for more than four years (*Mean Rank* = 191.84), those who have been here for two years to four years (*Mean Rank* = 186.82), those who have been Tasmania for one year to two years (*Mean Rank* = 174.66), and those who have been here less than twelve months (*Mean Rank* = 140.52). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .046$).

Table 4.30. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q41 –How often do you eat fast food by length of stay

	Q6: Length of stay in Tasmania (up to now):	N	Mean Rank
Q41: How often do you eat fast food?	Less than 12 months	94	140.52
	Over one year to two years	101	174.66
	Over two years to four years	109	186.82
	Over four years	37	191.84
	Total	341	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 15.658$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .001, $\eta^2 = .046$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different attitudes on eating fast food. Results indicated that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann-Whitney $U = 3803.5$, $z = -2.577$, $p = .010 < .050$). Participants who have been here for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 107.34) had more frequencies of eating fast food than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 87.96). The effect size is small ($r = -.18$);
- Participants who have been here for two to four years (*Mean Rank* = 114.89) had more frequencies of eating fast food than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 87.05). Mann-Whitney $U = 3717.5$, $z = -3.622$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.26$); and
- Participants who have been here for more than four years (*Mean Rank* = 79.95) had more frequencies of eating fast food than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 60.51). Mann-Whitney $U = 1223$, $z = -2.835$, $p = .005 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.25$).

4.6.3.9 Skipping breakfast

Table 4.31 indicates that participants’ attitudes on skipping breakfast were significantly different ($p = .031 < .050$) between over one year to two years (*Mean Rank* = 184.38), over four years (*Mean Rank* = 177.91), over two years to four years (*Mean Rank* = 174.95), and less than twelve months (*Mean Rank* = 145.59). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .026$).

Table 4.31. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q44 – How often do you skip breakfast by length of stay

	Q6: Length of stay in Tasmania (up to now):	N	Mean Rank
Q44. How often do you skip breakfast?	Less than 12 months	93	145.59
	Over one year to two years	100	184.38
	Over two years to four years	109	174.95
	Over four years	37	177.91
	Total	339	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 8.870$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .031, $\eta^2 = .026$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different attitudes on skip breakfast. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “less than 12 months” and “over one year to two years” (Mann-Whitney $U = 3579$, $z = -2.833$, $p = .005 < .050$). Participants who have been here for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 107.71) had more frequencies of skipping breakfast than those who have been here less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 85.48). The effect size is small ($r = -.20$); and
- Participants who have been here for two to four years (*Mean Rank* = 109.65) had more frequencies of skipping breakfast than those who have been here for less than 12 months (*Mean Rank* = 91.95), Mann-Whitney $U = 4180.5$, $z = -2.202$, $p = .028 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.16$).

4.6.3.10 Having exercises

According to Table 4.32, participants’ attitudes on having exercises are significantly different ($p = .024 < .050$) between those who have been Tasmania for “over four years” (*Mean Rank* = 208.19), those who have been here “less than twelve months” (*Mean Rank* = 174.49), those who have been here for “over two years to four years” (*Mean Rank* = 171.76), and those who have been here for “over one year to two years” (*Mean Rank* = 153.31). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .028$).

Table 4.32. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q47 –How often do you have exercises by length of stay

	Q6: Length of stay in Tasmania (up to now):	N	Mean Rank
Q47. How often do you have exercises?	Less than 12 months	94	174.49
	Over one year to two years	101	153.31
	Over two years to four years	109	171.76
	Over four years	37	208.19
	Total	341	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 9.452$, $df = 3$, Asymp.sig. = .024, $\eta^2 = .028$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different attitudes on having exercises. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been Tasmania “over one year to two years” and “over four years” (Mann- Whitney $U = 1304.5$, $z = -2.817$, $p = .005 < .050$). The effect size is small ($r = -.20$). Participants who have been here for over four years (*Mean Rank* = 84.74) did exercises more often than those who have been here for one to two years (*Mean Rank* = 63.92); and
- Participants who have been here for over four years (*Mean Rank* = 85.64) had more frequencies of doing exercises than those who have been here for two to four years (*Mean Rank* = 69.38), Mann- Whitney $U = 1567.5$, $z = -2.109$, $p = .035 < .050$). The effect size is small ($r = -.17$).

4.6.4 By English level

Participants’ English level is selected as independent variable to be examined if it has significant influences on participants’ views to adjustment problems (Q13 to Q31), racism discrimination (Q32 and Q33), psychological issues (Q34 to Q40), and their attitudes to health behaviours (Q41 to Q47), and coping strategies (Q48 to Q60). In this study, participants’ English levels were divided into five groups: excellent, good, just fine, weak, and very weak. Kruskal-Wallis tests are conducted to find if there are significant differences among these five groups. Results indicated that participants’ English level significantly influenced their views on safety (Q18), satisfaction with academic staff (Q20) and administrative staff (Q21) in the university, their academic performance (Q22), and familiarity with Australian

educational system (Q24) and Australian accent (Q27). Also, participants with different English levels had significantly different views on making friends (Q28 and Q29), having opportunities to participate in local society (Q30), and motivation to study (Q39). Besides, participants' English levels influenced their attitudes on doing exercises (Q47). In terms of coping strategies, participants' English levels influenced their attitudes to planning (Q48), taking a direct approach (Q49), and suppression (Q50).

4.6.4.1 Safety

According to Table 4.33, participants' views in safety were significantly different ($p=.033<.050$) between those who have an excellent English level (*Mean Rank* = 173.99), those who have a good English level (*Mean Rank* = 188.27), those who have a just fine English level (*Mean Rank* = 159.50), those who are weak in English (*Mean Rank* = 143.67), and those who are very weak in English (*Mean Rank* = 102.50). The effect size is small ($\eta^2=.031$).

Table 4.33. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q18 – I feel safe in Tasmania by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q18. I feel safe in Tasmania.	Excellent	34	173.99
	Good	115	188.27
	Just fine	158	159.50
	Weak	27	143.67
	Very weak	3	102.50
	Total	337	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 10.514$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .033, $\eta^2=.031$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on safety in Tasmania. The tests found that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “good” English level and those who have “just fine” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 7543$, $z = -2.543$, $p=.011<.050$). Participants who have a “good” English level

(*Mean Rank* = 150.41) felt safer in Tasmania than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 127.24). The effect size is small ($r = -.15$); and

- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 75.17) felt safer than those who are “weak” in English (*Mean Rank* = 55.87), Mann-Whitney $U = 1130.5$, $z = -2.338$, $p = .019 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.20$).

4.6.4.2 Satisfaction with academic staff

According to Table 4.34, participants’ satisfaction with academic staff were significantly different ($p = .009 < .050$) between those who have excellent English level (*Mean Rank* = 192.79), those who have good English level (*Mean Rank* = 187.61), those who have just fine English level (*Mean Rank* = 156.71), those who are weak in English (*Mean Rank* = 139.42), and those who are very weak in English (*Mean Rank* = 137.67). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .040$).

Table 4.34. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q20 – I am satisfied with the academic staff by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q20. I am satisfied with the academic staff.	Excellent	34	192.79
	Good	113	187.61
	Just fine	157	156.71
	Weak	30	139.42
	Very weak	3	137.67
	Total	337	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 13.490$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .009, $\eta^2 = .040$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different level of satisfaction with academic staff in Tasmania. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “just fine” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 2107$, $z = -2.060$, $p = .039 < .050$). Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 112.53) were more satisfied with academic staff in the university than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 92.42). The effect size is small ($r = -.15$);

- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (Mean Rank = 37.12) were more satisfied with academic staff than those who are weak in English (Mean Rank = 27.27), Mann-Whitney U = 353, $z = -2.242$, $p = .025 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.28$);
- Participants who are good at English (Mean Rank = 150.03) were more satisfied with academic staff in the university than those who have a “just fine” English level (Mean Rank = 125.04). Mann-Whitney U = 7228.5, $z = -2.792$, $p = .005 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.17$); and
- Participants who are good at English (Mean Rank = 176.30) were more satisfied with academic staff in the university than those who have a “weak” English level (Mean Rank = 55.82), Mann-Whitney U = 1209.5, $z = -2.607$, $p = .009 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.22$).

4.6.4.3 Satisfaction with administrative staff

According to Table 4.35, participants’ level of satisfaction with administrative staff in the university significantly different ($p = .001 < .050$) between those who have an “excellent” English ability a (Mean Rank = 192.79), those who have a “good” English ability (Mean Rank = 187.61), those who have a “just fine” English ability (Mean Rank = 156.71), those who have a “weak” English ability (Mean Rank = 139.42), and those who have a “very weak” English ability (Mean Rank = 137.67). The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = .059$).

Table 4.35. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q21 – I am satisfied with the admin staff by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q21. I am satisfied with the admin staff.	Excellent	34	190.38
	Good	112	193.76
	Just fine	157	152.64
	Weak	30	135.47
	Very weak	3	138.00
	Total	336	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 19.830$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .001, $\eta^2 = .059$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different level of satisfaction with admin staff in Tasmania. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “just fine” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 2080.5$, $z = -2.149$, $p = .032 < .050$). Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 113.31) were more satisfied with administrative staff in the university than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 92.25). The effect size is small ($r = -.16$);
- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 37.47) were more satisfied with administrative staff in the university than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 26.87), Mann-Whitney $U = 341$, $z = -2.468$, $p = .014 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.18$);
- Participants who are good at English (*Mean Rank* = 154.01) were more satisfied with administrative staff in the university than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 121.44). Mann-Whitney $U = 6662.5$, $z = -3.625$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.22$); and
- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 77.01) were more satisfied with administrative staff in the university than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 50.93), Mann-Whitney $U = 1063$, $z = -3.360$, $p = .001 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.28$).

4.6.4.4 Satisfaction with academic performance

According to Table 4.36, participants’ satisfaction with their academic performance significantly different ($p = .000 < .050$) between those who have an “excellent” English ability (*Mean Rank* = 207.05), those who have a “good” English ability (*Mean Rank* = 194.32), those who have a “just fine” English ability (*Mean Rank* = 147.04), those who have a “weak” English ability (*Mean Rank* = 126.87), and those who have a “very weak” English ability (*Mean Rank* = 108.83). The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = .098$).

Table 4.36. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q22 – I am satisfied with my academic performance by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q22. I am satisfied with my academic performance.	Excellent	33	207.05
	Good	110	194.32
	Just fine	156	147.04
	Weak	30	126.87
	Very weak	3	108.83
	Total	332	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 32.421$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .000, $\eta^2 = .098$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different level of satisfaction with their academic performance. Results indicated that:

- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 123.62) were more satisfied with their academic performance than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 88.95), Mann-Whitney $U = 1629.5$, $z = -3.661$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.27$);
- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 38.86) were more satisfied with their academic performance than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 24.45), Mann-Whitney $U = 268.5$, $z = -3.312$, $p = .001 < .050$. The effect size is medium ($r = -.42$);
- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 156.06) were more satisfied with academic performance than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 117.59). Mann-Whitney $U = 6098.5$, $z = -4.359$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.27$); and
- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 76.24) were more satisfied with academic performance than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 49.45), Mann-Whitney $U = 1018.5$, $z = -3.425$, $p = .001 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.29$).

4.6.4.5 Familiarity with Australian educational system

According to Table 4.37, participants' familiarity with Australian educational system were significantly different ($p=.038<.050$) with their different level of English:

"excellent" (*Mean Rank* = 179.68), "good" (*Mean Rank* = 180.13); "Just fine" (*Mean Rank* = 131.76), "weak" (*Mean Rank* = 131.76), and "very weak" (*Mean Rank* = 80.67). The effect size is small ($\eta^2=.030$).

Table 4.37. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q24 – I am familiar with the university educational system here by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q24. I am familiar with the University educational system here.	Excellent	34	179.68
	Good	113	180.13
	Just fine	157	166.18
	Weak	29	131.76
	Very weak	3	80.67
	Total	336	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 10.148$, $df = 4$, $Asymp.sig. = .038$, $\eta^2 = .030$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on familiarity with educational system in Australia. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been "excellent" English level and those who have "weak" English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 356.5$, $z = -2.026$, $p=.043<.050$). Participants who an "excellent" English level (*Mean Rank* = 36.01) were more familiar with the Australian educational system than those who have a "weak" English level (*Mean Rank* = 27.29). The effect size is small ($r=-.26$);
- Participants who have a "good" English level (*Mean Rank* = 75.63) were more familiar with Australian educational system than those who have a "weak" English level (*Mean Rank* = 55.40). Mann-Whitney $U = 1171.5$, $z = -2.527$, $p=.011<.050$. The effect size is small ($r=-.21$); and
- Participants who have a "just fine" English level (*Mean Rank* = 96.54) were more familiar with Australian educational system than those who have a "weak"

English level (*Mean Rank* = 77.07), Mann-Whitney $U = 1800$, $z = -1.967$, $p = .049 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.14$).

4.6.4.6 Familiarity with Australian accent

Table 4.38 indicates that participants' familiarity with Australian accent was significantly different ($p = .000 < .050$) in participants' English level: "excellent" (*Mean Rank* = 214.11), "good" (*Mean Rank* = 200.37), "Just fine" (*Mean Rank* = 152.76), "weak" (*Mean Rank* = 105.32), and "very weak" (*Mean Rank* = 97.17). The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = .126$).

Table 4.38. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q27 – I am used to the Australian accent by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q27. I am used to the Australian accent.	Excellent	35	214.11
	Good	115	200.37
	Just fine	157	152.76
	Weak	30	105.32
	Very weak	3	97.17
	Total	340	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 42.599$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .000, $\eta^2 = .126$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on familiarity with Australian accent.

- There was significantly different between participants who have been "excellent" English level and those who have "just fine" English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 1777$, $z = -3.515$, $p = .000 < .050$). Participants who have an "excellent" English level (*Mean Rank* = 124.23) were more familiar with Australian accent than those who have a "just fine" English level (*Mean Rank* = 90.32). The effect size is small ($r = -.25$);
- Participants who have an "excellent" English level (*Mean Rank* = 41.04) were more familiar with Australian accent than those who have a "weak" English level (*Mean Rank* = 23.62), Mann-Whitney $U = 243.5$, $z = -3.855$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is medium ($r = -.48$);

- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 159.39) were more familiar with Australian accent than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 119.74), Mann-Whitney $U = 6395.5$, $z = -4.460$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.27$);
- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 81.17) were more familiar with Australian accent than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 41.70), Mann-Whitney $U = 786$, $z = -4.852$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is medium ($r = -.40$); and
- Participants who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 98.67) were more familiar with Australian accent than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 69.55), Mann-Whitney $U = 1621.5$, $z = -2.924$, $p = .003 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.21$).

4.6.4.7 Making friends with local people

Table 4.39 indicates that participants' views on making friends with local people is significantly different ($p = .000 < .050$) by participants' English level: “excellent” (*Mean Rank* = 216.46), “good” (*Mean Rank* = 196.96), “Just fine” (*Mean Rank* = 153.30), “weak” (*Mean Rank* = 102.27), and “very weak” (*Mean Rank* = 154.67). The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = .115$).

Table 4.39. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q28 – I make friends with local people easily by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q28. I make friends with local people easily.	Excellent	35	216.46
	Good	114	196.96
	Just fine	157	153.30
	Weak	30	102.27
	Very weak	3	154.67
	Total	339	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 38.956$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .000, $\eta^2 = .115$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on making friends with local people easily. The tests found that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “just fine” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 1731$, $z = -3.591$, $p = .000 < .050$). Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 125.53) were easier to make friends with local people than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 90.03). The effect size is small ($r = -.26$);
- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 42.84) were easier to make friends with local people than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 21.52), Mann-Whitney $U = 180.5$, $z = -4.724$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is large ($r = -.58$);
- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 156.35) were easier to make friends with local people than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 121.23), Mann-Whitney $U = 6629.5$, $z = -3.828$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.23$);
- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 80.91) were easier to make friends with local people than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 40.55), Mann-Whitney $U = 751.5$, $z = -4.939$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is medium ($r = -.41$); and
- Participants who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 98.56) were easier to make friends with local people than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 70.15), Mann-Whitney $U = 1639.5$, $z = -2.762$, $p = .006 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.20$).

4.6.4.8 Having many friends

Table 4.40 shows that participants who have many friends at the university were significantly associated ($p = .003 < .050$) with their English level: “excellent” (*Mean Rank* = 206.69), “good” (*Mean Rank* = 185.13), “Just fine” (*Mean Rank* = 153.27), “weak” (*Mean Rank* = 152.12), and “very weak” (*Mean Rank* = 119.33). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .047$).

Table 4.40. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q29 – I have many friends at the university by English level

	Q7. My standard of English for my study at the university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q29. I have many friends at the university.	Excellent	35	206.69
	Good	112	185.13
	Just fine	157	153.27
	Weak	30	152.12
	Very Weak	3	119.33
	Total	337	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 15.956$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .003, $\eta^2 = .047$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on having friends in university. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “just fine” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 1897.5$, $z = -3.030$, $p = .000 < .050$). Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 125.53) had more friends at the university than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 90.03), The effect size is small ($r = -.22$);
- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 37.86) had more friends at the university than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 27.33), Mann-Whitney $U = 355$, $z = -2.358$, $p = .018 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.29$); and
- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 149.96) had more friends at the university than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 124.33), Mann-Whitney $U = 7117$, $z = -2.843$, $p = .004 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.17$).

4.6.4.9 Opportunities to participate in local activities

Table 4.41 indicates that participants’ views on opportunity to participate in local activities were significantly different ($p = .000 < .050$) in their English level:

“excellent” (*Mean Rank* = 216.93), “good” (*Mean Rank* = 182.64), “very weak”

(Mean Rank = 163.83), “Just fine” (Mean Rank = 159.05), and “Weak” (Mean Rank = 119.15). The effect size is medium ($\eta^2 = .066$).

Table 4.41. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q30 – I have many friends at the university by English level

	Q7. My standard of English for my study at the university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Excellent	35	216.93
	Good	114	182.64
	Just fine	156	159.05
	Weak	30	119.15
	Very Weak	3	163.83
	Total	338	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 22.193$, df = 4, Asymp.sig. = .000, $\eta^2 = .066$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on having friends in university. Findings are showed as the following:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “good” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 1575$, $z = -2.000$, $p = .045 < .050$). Participants who had an “excellent” English level (Mean Rank = 87.00) had more opportunities to participate in local activities than those who have a “good” English level (Mean Rank = 71.32). The effect size is small ($r = -.16$);
- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (Mean Rank = 87.00) had more opportunities to participate in local activities than those who have a “good” English level (Mean Rank = 71.32), Mann-Whitney $U = 1807$, $z = -3.276$, $p = .001 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.24$);
- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (Mean Rank = 87.00) had more opportunities to participate in local activities than those who have a “weak” English level (Mean Rank = 71.32), Mann-Whitney $U = 228$, $z = -4.086$, $p = .000 < .050$. The effect size is large ($r = -.50$);
- Participants who have a “good” English level (Mean Rank = 87.00) had more opportunities to participate in local activities than those who have a “just fine”

English level (*Mean Rank* = 127.55), Mann- Whitney $U = 7651.5$, $z = -2.061$, $p=.039<.050$. The effect size is small ($r=-.13$);

- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 78.25) had more opportunities to participate in local activities than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 50.63). Mann- Whitney $U = 1054$, $z = -3.403$, $p=.001<.050$. The effect size is small ($r=-.28$); and
- Participants who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 96.97) had more opportunities to participate in local activities than those who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 75.45), Mann- Whitney $U = 1798.5$, $z = -2.101$, $p=.036<.050$. The effect size is small ($r=-.15$).

4.6.4.10 Motivation to study

Table 4.42 indicates that participants’ responses to this item are significantly different ($p=.047<.050$) by their English level: “Good” (*Mean Rank* = 190.12), “Just Fine” (*Mean Rank* = 162.53), “Weak” (*Mean Rank* = 155.43), “Excellent” (*Mean Rank* = 147.09), and “Very weak” (*Mean Rank* = 145.50). The effect size is small ($\eta^2=.029$).

Table 4.42. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q39 –I feel motivated to study by English level

	Q7. My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Excellent	35	147.09
	Good	114	190.12
	Just fine	158	162.53
	Weak	28	155.43
	Very weak	3	145.50
	Total	338	
Chi-square $X^2 = 9.645$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .047, $\eta^2 = .029$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different views on this item. Results indicated that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “good” English level (Mann-

Whitney $U = 1503.5$, $z = -2.334$, $p = .020 < .050$). Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 60.96) were more motivated to study than those who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 79.31). The effect size is small ($r = -.19$); and

- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 149.46) were more motivated to study than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 127.15), Mann-Whitney $U = 7528.5$, $z = -2.466$, $p = .014 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.15$).

4.6.4.11 Doing exercises

Table 4.43 shows that participants’ attitudes on having exercises had significant differences in their English ability: “Excellent” (*Mean Rank* = 211.81), “Good” (*Mean Rank* = 178.35), “Very weak” (*Mean Rank* = 177.00), “Just fine” (*Mean Rank* = 160.07), and “Weak” (*Mean Rank* = 152.18). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .031$).

Table 4.43. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q47 –How often do you have exercises by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q47. How often do you have exercises?	Excellent	35	211.81
	Good	115	178.35
	Just fine	158	160.07
	Weak	30	152.18
	Very weak	3	177.00
	Total	341	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 10.593$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .032, $\eta^2 = .031$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different attitudes on doing exercises. Results showed that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “good” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 1591.5$, $z = -2.002$, $p = .045 < .050$). Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 87.81) had higher frequencies of doing exercises than those who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 71.75). The effect size is small ($r = -.16$);

- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 120.79) had higher frequencies of doing exercises than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 91.73), Mann-Whitney $U = 1932.5$, $z = -2.914$, $p = .004 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.21$); and
- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 37.37) had higher frequencies of doing exercises than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 27.90), Mann-Whitney $U = 372$, $z = -2.090$, $p = .037 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.26$).

4.6.4.12 Planning

Table 4.44 indicates that frequencies of taking this strategy are statistically significant differences ($p = .005 < .050$) with participants’ English ability: “Excellent” (*Mean Rank* = 199.91), “Good” (*Mean Rank* = 184.93), “Just fine” (*Mean Rank* = 158.00), “Weak” (*Mean Rank* = 152.57), and “Very weak” (*Mean Rank* = 56.00). $\chi^2 = 14.850$, $df = 4$, $p = .005$, $N = 339$. The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .044$).

Table 4.44. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q48 – Make a plan for next steps by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q48. Make a plan for my next steps.	Excellent	35	199.91
	Good	114	184.93
	Just fine	157	158.00
	Weak	30	152.57
	Very weak	3	56.00
	Total	339	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 14.860$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .005, $\eta^2 = .044$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different attitudes on doing exercises. Findings are listed below:

- There was significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “just fine” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 2057.5$, $z = -2.467$, $p = .014 < .050$). Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 116.21) used this strategy more often

than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 92.11). The effect size is small ($r = -.18$);

- Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 37.27) had higher frequencies of using this strategy than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 28.02), Mann-Whitney $U = 375.5$, $z = -2.098$, $p = .036 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.26$); and
- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 148.43) had higher frequencies of using this strategy than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 126.97), Mann-Whitney $U = 7532$, $z = -2.353$, $p = .019 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.14$).

4.6.4.13 Take a direct approach

Table 4.45 indicates that frequencies of taking this strategy were statistically significant differences ($p = .003 < .050$) with participants’ English ability: “excellent” (*Mean Rank* = 177.26), “good” (*Mean Rank* = 191.57), “just fine” (*Mean Rank* = 156.41), “weak” (*Mean Rank* = 144.98), and “very weak” (*Mean Rank* = 69.00). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .048$).

Table 4.45. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q49 – Take a direct approach to deal with the problems by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q49. Take a direct approach to deal with the problems.	Excellent	35	177.26
	Good	112	191.57
	Just fine	156	156.41
	Weak	30	144.98
	Very weak	3	69.00
	Total	336	
Chi-square $X^2 = 16.172$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .003, $\eta^2 = .048$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different attitudes on taking a direct approach to deal with the problems. Results indicated that:

- There was significantly different between participants who have a “good” English level and those who have a “just fine” English level (Mann-Whitney $U =$

6899, $z = -3.164$, $p = .002 < .050$). Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 150.90) had higher frequencies of using this strategy than those who have a “just fine” English level (*Mean Rank* = 122.72). The effect size is small ($r = -.19$); and

- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 75.64) had higher frequencies of using this strategy than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 56.05). Mann-Whitney $U = 1216.5$, $z = -2.487$, $p = .013 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.21$).

4.6.4.14 Focusing on solving the problems

Table 4.46 indicates that frequencies of taking this strategy are statistically significant differences ($p = .042 < .050$) with participants’ English ability: “excellent” (*Mean Rank* = 177.26), “good” (*Mean Rank* = 191.57), “just fine” (*Mean Rank* = 156.41), “weak” (*Mean Rank* = 144.98), and “very weak” (*Mean Rank* = 69.00). The effect size is small ($\eta^2 = .029$).

Table 4.46. Results of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA on Q50 – Focus on solving the problem, and put other things aside if necessary by English level

	Q7: My standard of English for my study at this university is:	N	Mean Rank
Q50. Focus on solving the problem, and put other things aside if necessary.	Excellent	35	190.89
	Good	114	179.26
	Just fine	157	166.87
	Weak	30	134.68
	Very weak	3	91.67
	Total	339	
Chi-square $\chi^2 = 9.933$, $df = 4$, Asymp.sig. = .042, $\eta^2 = .029$			

Post hoc tests were conducted to find out which pair of groups has significantly different attitudes on taking a direct approach to deal with the problems. The tests found that:

- There is significantly different between participants who have been “excellent” English level and those who have “weak” English level (Mann-Whitney $U = 359.5$, $z = -2.303$, $p = .021 < .050$). Participants who have an “excellent” English level (*Mean Rank* = 37.73) had higher frequencies of using this strategy than

those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 27.48). The effect size is small ($r = -.28$); and

- Participants who have a “good” English level (*Mean Rank* = 76.34) had higher frequencies of using this strategy than those who have a “weak” English level (*Mean Rank* = 57.92), Mann-Whitney $U = 1272.5$, $z = -2.293$, $p = .022 < .050$. The effect size is small ($r = -.19$).

4.6.5 By types of accommodation

This section focuses on examining if there is a significant relationship between types of accommodation and participants’ satisfaction with accommodation. A Kruskal-Wallis test found that the participants’ satisfaction with their accommodation was not significantly associated with what type of accommodation they were living (Chi-square $X^2 = 3.731$, $df = 3$, $p = .292 > .050$).

4.6.6 By sources of financial support

A Kruskal Wallis were conducted to examine if there are significant relationship between participants’ financial worries and different sources of financial support. The result indicated that participants’ financial worries were not significantly related to the sources of financial support they got. (Chi-square $X^2 = 5.009$, $df = 3$, $p = .171 > .050$).

4.6.7 By ownership of car (or bike)

A Mann-Whitney test was conducted to find out if there is a significant relationship between participants’ satisfaction with transport in Tasmania and their ownership of car or bike. Result (Table 4.47) indicates that participants’ satisfaction with transport system were significantly associated with their ownership of car or bike ($U = 10789$, $z = -2.761$, $p = .006 < .050$). Participants who have car or bike (*Mean Rank* = 188.59) were more satisfied with transport system in Tasmania than those who do not have car or bike (*Mean Rank* = 158.99). The effect size is small ($r = -.16$).

Table 4.47. Mann-Whitney U test on Q15 I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania by ownership of car or bike

	Q11. Do you have a car/bike?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Q15. I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania.	Yes	120	188.59	22631
	No	218	158.99	34660
	Total	338		
Mann-Whitney $U = 10789$, $z = -2.761$, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = .006, $r = -.16$				

4.7 Relationship between adjustment problems and psychological health

In the last section, Kruskal-Wallis tests and Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to examine if participants' demographic factors significantly influenced their views and attitudes to different aspects of health and wellbeing. In this section, Spearman's rank-order correlation tests are used to find out what factors significantly associate with participants' psychological wellbeing. Two important values: p-value and r_s are obtained as indicators to show the relationships between two variables. If p-value is less than .050, it means that there is a significant association between the two variables. The value of r_s ranges from -1.00 to 1.00, which indicates the strength of the relationship. A value of 0 indicates no relationship at all, a correlation of 1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and a value of -1.0 indicates a perfect negative correlation (Coakes, et al., 2010). The value between 0 and 1 indicates that:

- $r_s = .10$ to $.29$ ($r = -.10$ to $-.29$) small strength of relationship
- $r_s = .30$ to $.49$ ($r = -.30$ to $-.49$) medium strength of relationship
- $r_s = .50$ to 1.0 ($r = -.50$ to -1.0) large strength of relationship

Four typical psychological symptoms mentioned in the literature were examined in this study: homesickness (Q34), anxiety (Q35 and Q40), loneliness (Q36 and Q37), and depression (Q38 and Q39). The relationships with participants' responses to adjustment problems and racial discrimination are examined to found out which

factors are significantly related to participants' homesickness, anxiety, loneliness and depression (Only significant relationship were presented).

4.7.1.1 Homesickness

In this section, Spearman's rank-order tests are conducted to found out the factors which are significantly associated to participants' homesickness. Results indicated that three factors were significantly associated to their homesickness: financial worries (Q14), making friends with local people (Q28), and opportunities to participant local activities (Q30).

4.7.1.1.1 *I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.*

Result indicates that there was a positively correlation between participants' financial worries with their level of homesickness, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .000 < .010$, $r_s = .191$).

Table 4.48. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q14 I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania and Q34 I feel homesick

		Q14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	Q34. I feel homesick.
Q14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.191**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	340	338
Q34. I feel homesick.	Correlation Coefficient	.191*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	338	339

4.7.1.1.2 *I make friends with local people easily.*

Table 4.49 indicates that there was a negatively correlation between participants' views in making friends with local people and their level of homesickness, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .014 < .050$, $r_s = -.133$).

Table 4.49. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q28 I make friends with local people easily and Q34 I feel homesick

		Q28. I make friends with local people easily.	Q34. I feel homesick.
Q28. I make friends with local people easily.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.133*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.014
	N	339	337
Q34. I feel homesick.	Correlation Coefficient	-.133*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.
	N	337	339

4.7.1.1.3 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.

Table 4.50 shows that there was a negatively correlation between participants who have more opportunities and their level of homesickness, and the strength relationship is small ($p=.024 < .050$, $r_s = -.123$).

Table 4.50 . Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q34 I feel homesick

		Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Q34. I feel homesick.
Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.123*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.024
	N	339	336
Q34. I feel homesick.	Correlation Coefficient	-.123*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.
	N	336	338

4.7.1.2 Anxiety

In this section, Spearman's rank-order tests are conducted to found out the factors which are significantly related to participants' anxiety. Results indicated that these five items were significantly associated to participants' level of anxiety: safety (Q18), satisfaction with academic staff (Q20), satisfaction with administrative staff (Q21), having friends in the university (Q29), and opportunities to participate in local activities (Q30).

4.7.1.2.1 I feel safe in Tasmania.

Table 4.51 indicates that participants' safety was positively correlated with their level of anxiety, and relationship was small ($p = .048 < .050$, $r_s = .108$).

Table 4.51. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q18 I feel safe in Tasmania and Q40 I feel restless in Tasmania

		Q18. I feel safe in Tasmania.	Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.
Q18. I feel safe in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.108*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.048
	N	337	336
Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	.108*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	.
	N	336	338

4.7.1.2.2 I am satisfied with the academic staff.

According to Table 4.52, participants' satisfaction with academic staff was negatively correlated with participants' level of anxiety, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .000 < .010$, $r_s = -.202$).

Table 4.52. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q20 I am satisfied with my academic staff and Q40 I feel restless in Tasmania

		Q20. I am satisfied with my academic staff.	Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.
Q20. I am satisfied with my academic staff.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.202**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	337	334
Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	-.202**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	334	338

4.7.1.2.3 I am satisfaction with their admin staff.

Table 4.53 shows that their satisfaction with admin staff was negatively correlated with their anxiety, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .002 < .010$, $r_s = -.171$).

Table 4.53. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q20 I am satisfied with my academic staff and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q21. I am satisfaction with their admin staff.	Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.
Q21. I am satisfaction with their admin staff.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.171**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
	N	338	333
Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	-.171**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
	N	333	336

4.7.1.2.4 I have many friends at the university.

Table 4.54 shows that participant's view in this item was positively correlated with participants' anxiety, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .010 < .050$, $r_s = .141$).

Table 4.54. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q29 I have many friends at the university and Q40 I feel restless in Tasmania

		Q29. I have many friends at the university.	Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.
Q29. I have many friends at the university.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.141**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.010
	N	338	334
Q40. I feel restless in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	.141**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.
	N	334	337

4.7.1.2.5 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities

Table 4.55 indicates that participants who have more opportunities to participate in local activities was negatively correlated with their level of anxiety with a small strength of relationship ($p = .007 < .010$, $r_s = -.147$).

Table 4.55. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q35 I feel upset easily

		Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Q35. I feel upset easily.
Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.147*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007
	N	338	336
Q35. I feel upset easily.	Correlation Coefficient	-.147*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.
	N	336	339

4.7.1.3 Loneliness

In this section, Spearman's rank-order tests are conducted to found out the factors which are significantly related to participants' loneliness. Results indicated that participants' views to these five items were significantly associated to their anxiety: safety (Q18), satisfaction with academic staff (Q20), satisfaction with administrative staff (Q21), having friends in the university (Q29), and opportunities to participate in local activities (Q30).

4.7.1.3.1 I am worried about cost of living in Tasmania

Table 4.56 indicates that participants' financial worries was positively correlated with their loneliness with a small strength of relationship ($p = .011 < .050$, $r_s = .139$).

Table 4.56. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q14 I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania and Q36 I feel lonely in Tasmania

		Q14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	Q36. I feel lonely in Tasmania.
Q14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.139*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.011
	N	340	338
Q36. I feel lonely in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	.191*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.
	N	338	338

4.7.1.3.2 I am satisfied with my academic staff

Table 4.57 shows that there was a negatively correlation between participants' satisfaction with the academic staff and their level of loneliness, and strength of relationship was small ($p = .000 < .010$, $r_s = -.201$).

Table 4.57. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q20 I am satisfied with my academic staff and Q37 It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends

		Q20. I am satisfied with my academic staff.	Q37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends
Q20. I am satisfied with my academic staff.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.201**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	337	334
Q37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends	Correlation Coefficient	-.201**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	334	338

4.7.1.3.3 I am satisfaction with their admin staff

Table 4.58 indicates that there was a negatively correlation between participants' satisfaction with admin staff with their level of loneliness with a small strength of relationship ($p = .031 < .050$, $r_s = -.118$).

Table 4.58. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q21 I am satisfied with my admin staff and Q37 It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends

		Q21. I am satisfaction with their admin staff.	Q37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.
Q21. I am satisfaction with their admin staff.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.118*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.031
	N	338	333
Q37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.	Correlation Coefficient	-.118*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	.
	N	333	336

4.7.1.3.4 I have many friends at the university.

Table 4.59 indicates that participants who have many friends at the university was negatively correlated with their level of loneliness, and strength of relationship was small ($p = .002 < .010$, $r_s = -.172$).

Table 4.59. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q29 I have many friends at the university and Q37 it is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends

		Q29. I have many friends at the university.	Q37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.
Q29. I have many friends at the university.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.172**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
	N	338	334
Q37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.	Correlation Coefficient	-.172**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
	N	334	337

4.7.1.3.5 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities

Table 4.60 indicates that participants who have many opportunities to participate in local activities had a low level of loneliness, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .006 < .010$, $r_s = -.149$).

Table 4.60. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q36 I feel lonely in Tasmania

		Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Q36. I feel lonely in Tasmania.
Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.149*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.006
	N	338	335
Q36. I feel lonely in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	-.149*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.
	N	335	338

Table 4.61 shows a same finding with above that participants' who have many opportunities to participate in local activities had a low responses to loneliness, the strength of relationship is small ($p = .006 < .010$, $r_s = -.151$).

Table 4.61. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q37 it is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends

		Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Q37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.
Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.151*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.006
	N	338	335
Q37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.	Correlation Coefficient	-.151*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.
	N	335	338

4.7.1.4 Depression

In this section, Spearman's rank-order tests are conducted to found out the significant factors which are related to participants' depression. Results indicated that participants' satisfaction with accommodation (Q13), cost of living (Q14), transport system (Q15), availability of food (Q16), and safety (Q18) were significantly related to their depression. Besides, participants' satisfaction with academic staff (Q20), administrative staff (Q21), academic performance (Q22), university services (Q23, Q25), and familiarity with Australian university system (Q24), inclusiveness in the class (Q26) all are closely associated with their depression. Also, participants' views to Australian accent (Q27), making friends (Q28 and Q29), and opportunities to participate in local activities (Q30) are significantly related to their depression.

4.7.1.4.1 I am satisfied with my accommodation.

Table 4.62 indicates that participants' satisfaction with their accommodation was positively associated with their motivation to study, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .012 < .050$, $r_s = .136$).

Table 4.62. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q13 I am satisfied with my accommodation and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q13. I am satisfied with my accommodation.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q13. I am satisfied with my accommodation.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.136*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.012
	N	341	338
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.136*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.
	N	338	338

4.7.1.4.2 I am worried about cost of living in Tasmania

According to Table 4.63, participants' financial worries positively correlated with their level of depression, and the strength of relationship is small ($p = .000 < .010$, $r_s = .243$).

Table 4.63. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q14 I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania and Q38 I feel tired easily

		Q14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	Q38. I feel tired easily.
Q14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.243**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	340	338
Q38. I feel tired easily.	Correlation Coefficient	.243**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	337	338

4.7.1.4.3 I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania

Table 4.64 indicates participants' satisfaction with transport system in Tasmania positively associated with their responses to this item, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .038 < .050$, $r_s = .113$).

Table 4.64. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q15 I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania and Q39. I feel motivated to study

		Q15. I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q15. I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.113*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.038
	N	340	337
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.113*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.
	N	337	338

4.7.1.4.4 I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania

Participants' satisfaction with food availability was positively correlated their level of depression, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .045 < .050$, $r_s = .109$).

Table 4.65. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q16 I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q16. I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q16. I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.109*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.045
	N	338	337
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.109*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.
	N	337	341

4.7.1.4.5 I feel safe in Tasmania

Table 4.66, participants' views on safety is positively associated with their motivation to study so that it was negatively related to their level of depression. The strength of relationship is small ($p = .000 < .050$, $r_s = .247$).

Table 4.66. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q18 I feel safe in Tasmania and Q40 I feel restless in Tasmania

		Q18. I feel safe in Tasmania.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q18. I feel safe in Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	337	336
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.247*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	336	338

4.7.1.4.6 I am satisfied with my academic staff

Results showed that participants' satisfaction with academic staff in the university was negatively correlated with their level of depression with a small strength of relationship ($p = .014 < .050$, $r_s = -.134$).

Table 4.67. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q20 I am satisfied with my academic staff and Q38 I feel tired easily

		Q20. I am satisfied with my academic staff.	Q38. I feel tired easily.
Q20. I am satisfied with my academic staff.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.134*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.014
	N	337	334
Q38. I feel tired easily.	Correlation Coefficient	-.134**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.
	N	334	338

4.7.1.4.7 I am satisfaction with administrative staff

Result indicated that participants' satisfaction with administrative staff was correlated with their level of depression, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .000 < .010$, $r_s = .224$).

Table 4.68. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q21 I am satisfied with my admin staff and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q21. I am satisfaction with their admin staff.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q21. I am satisfaction with their admin staff.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.224**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	336	334
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.224**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	334	338

4.7.1.4.8 I am satisfied with my academic performance

Results showed that participants' satisfaction with their academic performance is positively correlated with their motivation to study so that it was negatively related to their level of depression, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .000 < .010$, $r_s = .204$).

Table 4.69. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q22 I am satisfied with my academic performance and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q22. I am satisfied with my academic performance.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q22. I am satisfied with my academic performance.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.204**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	332	329
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.204**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	329	338

4.7.1.4.9 International students are well looked after by the university.

Results indicated that participants' responses to this item were positively correlated with their motivation to study. In other words, it was negatively related to participants' level of depression. The strength of relationship was small ($p = .001 < .010$, $r_s = .187$).

Table 4.70. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q23 International students are well looked after by the university and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q23. International students are well looked after by the university.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q23. International students are well looked after by the university.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.187**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	336	333
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.187**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	333	338

4.7.1.4.10 I am familiar with the university education system here.

Participants' familiarity with Australian university education system are positively correlated with their motivation to study, and strength of relationship was small ($r_s = .172$, $p = .002 < .010$).

Table 4.71. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q24 I am familiar with the university education system here and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q24. I am familiar with the university education system here.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q24. I am familiar with the university education system here.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.172**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
	N	336	334
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.172**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
	N	334	338

4.7.1.4.11 I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania.

Participants' responses to this item was positively correlated with their motivation to study, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .006 < .010$, $r_s = .150$).

Table 4.72. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q25 I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q25. I have been well informed about the university of Tasmania.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q25. I have been well informed about the university of Tasmania.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.150**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.006
	N	336	333
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.150**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.
	N	333	338

4.7.1.4.12 I feel included in my class.

Participants' views on inclusiveness in class was positively correlated with their motivation to study, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .000 < .010$, $r_s = .242$).

Table 4.73. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q26 I feel included in my class and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q26. I feel included in my class.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q26. I feel included in my class.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.242**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	331	328
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.242**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	328	338

4.7.1.4.13 I am used to the Australian accent.

Participants' familiarity with Australian accent were negatively correlated with their level of depression, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .011 < .050$, $r_s = -.139$).

Table 4.74. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q27 I am used to the Australian accent and Q38 I feel tired easily

		Q27. I am used to the Australian accent.	Q38. I feel tired easily.
Q27. I am used to the Australian accent.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.139*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.011
	N	340	328
Q38. I feel tired easily.	Correlation Coefficient	-.139*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.
	N	328	338

4.7.1.4.14 I make friends with local people easily

Results shows that there was a positive correlation between participants' views on making friends with local people and their motivation to study, and the strength of relationship is small ($p = .002 < .010$, $r_s = .165$).

Table 4.75. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q28 I make friends with local people easily and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q28. I make friends with local people easily.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q28. I make friends with local people easily.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.165**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
	N	339	339
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.165**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
	N	339	338

4.7.1.4.15 I have many friends at the university.

There was a positive correlation between participants' views to this item and their motivation to study, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .017 < .050$, $r_s = .131$).

Table 4.76. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q29 I have many friends at the university and Q39 I feel motive to study

		Q29. I have many friends at the university.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q29. I have many friends at the university.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.131*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.017
	N	337	334
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.131*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.
	N	334	338

4.7.1.4.16 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities

Participants' views on participating in local activities was positively correlated with their motivation to study, and the strength of relationship was small ($p = .005 < .010$, $r_s = .152$).

Table 4.77. Results of Spearman's rank-order test on Q30 I have many opportunities to participate in local activities and Q39 I feel motivated to study

		Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Q39. I feel motivated to study.
Q30. I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.152**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.005
	N	338	335
Q39. I feel motivated to study.	Correlation Coefficient	.152**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.
	N	335	338

4.8 Conclusion

A detailed process of quantitative data analysis was presented in this chapter. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted in this study to address participants' views and attitudes to these issues related to their health and wellbeing. Participants' demographics including age, gender, English level and length of stay in Tasmania were also taken into consideration, and their statistical relationship with participants' responses were found out. Significant factors associated to participants' psychological wellbeing were also identified in this chapter. These findings emerged from quantitative data analysis will be integrated with qualitative data and discussed in the discussion chapter (Chapter 6).

Chapter 5 Qualitative data analysis

5.1 Introduction

As stated previously, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this study. The last chapter gave a detailed description of the process of the quantitative data analysis. With the assistance of the Predictive Analytical Software (PASW, version 18) (formerly known as SPSS), both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to quantitatively interpret the participants' responses showing statistically significant associations between variables. This chapter introduces a process of analysing qualitative data.

As the qualitative data are basically meaning-based, it is not about numbers and figures as seen in the quantitative data. It is the meaning manifested through the verbal expressions of the participants in the interviews. Thus, thematic analysis was suitable to use in dealing with the qualitative data. This chapter describes the process of the qualitative data analysis and presents the themes emerging from the data. Please note that the real text of the responses of international students cited in this chapter is the original text, in other words their linguistic errors are kept to present the authenticity of their interviews.

5.2 Qualitative data analysis

5.2.1 Participants' profiles

A total of 25 respondents including 20 international students and 5 university staff who were studying or working in the University of Tasmania from March 2009 to May 2010 participated in the semi-structured interview. Two versions of the interview schedule were prepared respectively for students and staff to explore their perceptions of the international students' health and wellbeing. In order to provide a broad range of participation, participants' demographic backgrounds

were taken into account when researchers selected volunteers to participate in the study. After making contact with them individually, 25 participants were finally chosen to participate in the face-to-face interview for this study.

Among the five staff-participants, three were academics from three faculties: Faculty of Education, Faculty of Business and Australian Maritime College (AMC); and two were administrative staff from the International Service in UTAS (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Staff participants' backgrounds

Variables	Number of cases (N=5)
Academic staff	
- Faculty of Education	1
- Australian Maritime College (AMC)	1
- Faculty of Business	1
Admin staff (International Services)	
- Sandy Bay campus	1
- Newnham	1

A total of 20 international students were interviewed in this study. Their backgrounds are shown in the Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Student participants' backgrounds

Variables	Number of cases (N=20)
Gender	
- Male	9
- Female	11
Age groups	
- Under 20	2
- 20-24	4
- Over 24	14
Country of origin	
- Mainland China	7
- Korea	3
- Iran	1
- India	1
- Vietnam	1
- Japan	1
- Indonesia	1
- Malaysia	1
- Nepal	1
- Hong Kong	1
- Pakistan	1
- Singapore	1
Academic faculty	
- Education/Arts	9
- Science/Engineering& Technology/AMC	7
- Health Science	1
- Commerce/Business	3
Degrees currently pursuing	
- Undergraduate	7
- Postgraduate by coursework	9
- Postgraduate by research	4
Length of stay (up to the present)	
- 6 months to 12 months	7
- Over one year to two years	9
- Over two years to four years	2
- Over four years	2
Marital status	
- Single (never married)	17
- Married or de facto with children	3
Campus	
- Sandy Bay	8
- Newnham	12

5.2.2 Techniques of analysis for qualitative data

The selection of an appropriate data analysis method depends essentially on the research aim and its objectives. Among five research objectives developed in the Methodology Chapter (Chapter 3), four of them including Research Objective 1, 3, 4, and 5 were designed to be achieved by the qualitative data.

- **Research Objective 1:** to examine the different kinds of problems in the health and wellbeing of international students in the Tasmanian tertiary education sector.
- **Research Objective 3:** to identify the common and different coping strategies used by these students in dealing with health and wellbeing.
- **Research Objective 4:** to examine the significance of social support with regard to health and wellbeing given to international students within the Tasmanian tertiary education context.
- **Research Objective 5:** to provide some recommendations to international students, university academics and administrators, and social groups for enhancing the health and wellbeing of tertiary international students in Tasmania and some implications in a wider educational discourse.

These four research objectives are all aimed to explore the participants' in-depth perceptions and their insights into certain aspects related to international students' health and wellbeing. Hence, a thematic analysis is employed to explore these themes from the qualitative data because a thematic analysis is defined as an inductive data analysis method, which "comprises the identification of the main, recurrent or most important...issues or themes arising in a body evidence" (Pope, Mays, & Popay, 2007, p. 96). Through systematic data analyses, themes emerging from the set of data and the relationship identified among these themes gave researchers an explicit understanding of the participants' perceptions of these issues. Thus, a thematic analysis is an appropriate analysis method which is able to achieve the above four research objectives in this study.

Coding is the essential step of a thematic analysis. "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient,

essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). “Coding means relating sections of the data to the categories which the researcher has either previously developed or is developing on an on-going basis as the data are being collected” (Bowling, 2002, pp. 415-416).

In this study, two cycles of coding were undertaken to make participants’ views and thoughts explicit so as to explore their in-depth insights. The first coding cycle was an initial coding process. With computer-aided qualitative data analysis software - NVivo (Version 8), researchers read the transcripts carefully sentence by sentence, and then drew and dropped the relevant meaning units into the same coding group. At the same time, new codes were created when new meanings which did not fit any existing coding groups were encountered. Following the first cycle of coding, the second cycle of coding was then undertaken. At this stage, such analytic skills as classifying, integrating, abstracting, and conceptualizing were utilized to find out the deeper relationship among those codes produced from the first cycle coding. Along with this identified relationship, hierarchical structures were established and themes then gradually emerged from the sets of data.

After two cycles of systemically analysing, a hierarchical structure which consisted of 7 themes and 22 subthemes was established. The 7 themes include:

- Theme 1: Preparation and expectation before departure
- Theme 2: Transition to a new environment
- Theme 3: Social contact
- Theme 4: Psychological responses
- Theme 5: Coping strategies
- Theme 6: Social support
- Theme 7: Suggestions and recommendations

The 7 themes and 22 subthemes are discussed in the following Section 5.3 Results in detail.

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Theme 1: Preparation and expectation before departure

The first theme emerging from the data analysis is preparation and expectation before departure. Five subthemes arise from the major theme. Theme 1 and its five subthemes are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Theme 1: Preparation and expectation before departure

Theme 1: Preparation and expectation before departure
▪ Subtheme 1: Information preparation
▪ Subtheme 2: Mental preparation
▪ Subtheme 3: Previous health status and health preparation
▪ Subtheme 4: Financial preparation
▪ Subtheme 5: Expectation

It is indicated by the participants in the interviews that it was necessary to be well prepared before their departure from the home country. *“It would be a good idea to find as much as you can before you arrived. To be prepared, so that they have some idea what to expect”* (Administrative Staff 1). Full preparation by international students before their departure relates to their successful adaption to the new environment within reasonable time. Five aspects were responded to by participants. They are “information preparation”, “mental preparation”, “health preparation”, “financial preparation” and “expectation”.

“Information preparation” refers to having a basic knowledge of the country, including its weather, culture, people, and religion etc. as well as the city in which the university is located, what the characteristics of the city are and what the differences between this city and other cities are.

People need to know Tasmania is a beautiful place with a lot of nature, but the city is not as exciting as some countries. It is different and smaller, but it is easier to adapt to in a smaller community. I think this is important to realize. (Administrative Staff 1)

Besides, academic preparation is an important part of information preparation. International students have to have some idea of the courses offered by the university and the course they are undertaking to study.

Apart from “information preparation”, “mental preparation” was emphasized by the participants. Studying abroad is an extremely sea change for most international students, so problems such as homesickness, loneliness, and depression during their adjustment to an unfamiliar environment could occur. A thorough mental preparation can alleviate their shocks and help them adapt to the host country successfully. Hence, international students should be alerted to the possibility of difficulties which may result in psychological problems.

Most international students when they make a decision to live in or go to another country to study, make a huge jump. You know, it's a big step to take, and having exposed in quite a few of years, a lot of unexpected things happen. They are expected to feel homesick because they are moving a long distance away. They are expected to feel a little bit lonely, because in making the decision to travel thousands of miles away, they are not just moving around the corner, lots of thought about these. They think these may happen. If you move from home, loneliness and homesickness do happen. (Administrative staff 2)

Because when I decided to go abroad, I have already known I have to survive, and I have to meet difficulties which I have never met before. (student 5)

As the participants' responses, “previous health status and health preparation” were factor, which was directly related to international students' current health and wellbeing. As one of the admin staff (Administrative Staff 2) argued, “The primary

factor which is related to their current health would be what their health and wellbeing were before they even came here". In fact, according to the requirements of visa application, all international students have to undergo medical check before they leave their home country and only those who meet the health requirements were eligible for a student visa (IMMI, 2011a). Additionally, some students would took extra medical preparation, such as dental checks and flu vaccine, before they left their home country. This is very beneficial in maintaining their health overseas. A Chinese student gave the following response:

And in February, I got a swan flu injection. Now I feel better. I feel protected. It's very good. I read the instruction, and it would be effective for at least one year, so I don't think I can get that flu. (Student 13)

"Financial preparation" is also an important aspect found in the participants' responses. According to Australian policy (IMMI, 2011a), international students have an adequate financial budget which can cover the tuition fees, cost of living, and other expenses, including travelling, entertainment, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to have a sound financial planning in place before making the decision to study abroad; otherwise they could have a high level of financial worriers and thus negatively influence their psychological and social wellbeing. A Malaysian student participant (Student 8) noted that, *"Financial situation and cost of living, it's so manageable because we all more or less have budgeted on how much we are going to spend to come here"*.

Apart from preparations, international students may have expectations to the new country. One participant pointed out that the expectations would more or less affect these students' wellbeing especially when they just arrived. When they find their expectations to be different from or much greater than the reality they experience in the host country, they would feel disappointed.

When I was in Korea, I always thought coming here is like a dream. Before I came here, I thought I can speak English here, I can talk with Australian, I can go to the pub, making a joke. But when I am here, I found it is really different from my expectations. It is not easy to make friends with locals

because it is hard to understand their culture and their jokes, and my English is not as good as I expected. So sometimes I feel so depressed. (student 17)

5.3.2 Theme 2: Transition to a new environment

When international students depart from their homeland and arrive in the host country, their “sojourn journey” has started. In their eyes, the host country would be a completely new environment and their life would be totally changed. Some participants gave responses on this issue. A Japanese student participant (student 5) said, “My life in Tasmania is so different from Japan”. A Malaysian student participant (student 8) gave a similar response, “Life is very different from where I come from. I come from Malaysia... the thing you want to get is different, and lifestyle is also different.” The data analysis found that there are three subthemes within this theme of “transition to a new environment”: “general living environment”, “academic environment”, and “socio-cultural environment”.

Table 5.4. Theme 2: Transition to a new environment

Theme 2: Transition to a new environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subtheme 1: General living environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Accommodation</i> ▪ <i>transportation</i> ▪ <i>Diet</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subtheme 2: Academic environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Language barriers</i> ▪ <i>Unfamiliar educational style</i> ▪ <i>Intense Workload</i> ▪ <i>Pressure</i> ▪ <i>Benefits</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subtheme 3: Socio-cultural environment

5.3.2.1 Subtheme 1: General living environment

The results of the data analysis showed that there were four aspects responded to by participants, including accommodation, transport, and diet within the theme “general living environment”

5.3.2.1.1 Accommodation

Accommodation provides a basic living place for international students. The results of the data analysis indicated that most participants were satisfied with their accommodation in Tasmania. One Arabian student participant (Student 1) said, *"It is a big house...very nice, just like home"*. A Chinese student participant (student 4) evaluated his house, saying *"Basically, it's ok, not very good. Fine"*.

Three issues related to accommodation emerged from the data: "types of accommodation and economic consideration", "accommodation location", and "relationship with housemates and/or landlords".

5.3.2.1.1.1 Types of accommodation and economic considerations

There are four typical types of accommodation in Tasmania mentioned by the participants. They are "shared house", "living with family or other relatives", "homestay" and "hostel". Among these, "shared house" emerged as the most popular type of accommodation. Eleven out of twenty student participants gave responses to this category. Most student participants chose a shared living place for economic reasons. Compared to other types of accommodation, a shared house is the cheapest, as the student participant from Hong Kong (Student 16) said, *"I was living in home stay before, the price was nearly \$200, but this shared house cost only \$85, much cheaper than the home stay"*.

Some students who chose to live in homestay are below 18 years old. According to Australian policy (IMMI, 2011b), international students who are less than 18 years old must have acceptable arrangements for their accommodation, support and general welfare for the duration of their student visa or until they turn 18. Those who are eligible to provide accommodation and welfare must be either their parent; a relative over 21 year of age nominated by their parents; or their education provider. Most international students' parents are not living in Australia and also they do not have relatives in Australian. Thus, homestay becomes an acceptable option. Another reason obtained from the data analysis is that international students want to establish a closer relationship with the local society through the homestay. They may acquire a great knowledge of the local culture, which can help them to successfully adapt to the socio-cultural environment. A Japanese student

participants' (Student 5) response represents most international students' thoughts. *"Firstly, I lived in a homestay, because I really wanted to know what Australian culture is, it is much easier for me to understand Australian culture when I resorted to homestay"*. However, homestay expenditure is much higher than other types of accommodation. This restricts international students from choosing homestays as their main source of accommodation. A Korean participant's response gave an explanation:

Actually I want to live with Australians, but I have to pay more if I live in homestay. I cannot afford it. Most Asian students want to practice English with a local. They want to have more opportunities to be with locals. But we don't have many chances to interact with them. (Student 17)

Some students choose a university hostel, especially an on-campus hostel because of security. Secondly, living in a university hostel presents good opportunities for international students to meet and get to know local contacts. A Japanese student (Student 5) responded that, *"when I moved to an accommodation on campus which is also good, I met a lot of Australian students and we became friends"*. However, according to the data analysis, there are two weaknesses which reduce the numbers of hostel students. The first one is the price. According to UTAS website (UTAS, 2011a), the university hostel (including off-campus and on-campus) are approximately \$228 per week, which is relatively higher than other types of accommodation. As a Korean student participant (Student 11) said: *"I am living in a hostel. It is quite good. But I found the price is a little bit higher. My friend is living in a shared house which is much cheaper than a hostel"*. Another is because university hostels are usually closed during the long vacation. A Japanese student participant (Student 5) said, *"I have to move out and find a place to stay during the long vacation. It is really inconvenient for me"*.

5.3.2.1.1.2 Accommodation location

Apart from types of accommodation, its location is another important factor for the international student to consider. The results of the data analysis showed that most international students preferred to choose an accommodation which is close to the

university campus for three reasons: security; reduction of cost of traveling; and the time factors.

A Chinese student participant (Student 3) gave the following response, *“My accommodation is quite close to the uni, it’s quite safe, because some of my friends told me that if you live far away from the university, they would consider about safety”*. And an Indian student (Student 2) said that, *“But it is pretty costly, because it is quite far away from university. I have to change two buses to come to uni. So a lot of time waster on the way. But nearby I don’t find many good houses”*.

Besides the above factors, community environment surrounding the accommodation of international students is another factor which is mentioned by a participant:

I feel sorry for international students coming here moving into a house near the university, which is in a low social-economic area. I think most of the people you found in Mowbary area are not really representative of Australians. Many of them are rough, probably not well-educated. In contrast to international students, most of whom are from good educated background, good home environment etc. So I think that is a problem. When they are having a break, the international student drive around, see other parts of Australia, or Tasmania, these people have an ideal of the general Australian population. I think that is important to mention. (Academic staff 3)

5.3.2.1.1.3 Relationship with housemates and/or landlords

The participants’ responses also indicated that the relationship with housemates and/or landlords was closely related to the evaluation of their accommodation. As an interviewed staff member (Administrative staff 1) said, *“Some students probably suffer severe stress because of whom they are living with or probably they have problems with their landlord. That can affect their health and wellbeing”*. She also gave an example as an explanation:

I have a student, other persons are completely annoyed with her, even though they have a separate toilet, separate bathroom. As soon as she enters the kitchen, this is just terrible for her. it is very stressful for her a lot and pushes her to find somewhere else. So whom you share the house with ...can cause a lot of friction. ...Some people encounter real problems with the landlord. Sometimes, sharing a kitchen with others, for example, Muslim and Chinese students are sharing kitchen together. The Muslim need to cook and eat "halal", while the Chinese eat and cook anything! (Administrative staff 1)

According to the response of participating students, however, most of them get along with their housemates and landlords. Having a harmonious relationship with housemates and landlords contributes to the satisfaction of their accommodation. As a Pakistan student participant (Student 18) said, *"My landlord is a very nice person. He can solve any problem which we are facing. I am very satisfied with my accommodation"*. Also, a good relationship can eliminates loneliness and relieve acculturative stress and. A Chinese student participant (Student 20) said, *"I found another housemate who is very good, cared for me... so since I came, I haven't felt lonely"*

5.3.2.1.2 Public transport

According to participants' responses, evaluation of transportation in a new place is mainly perceived from three aspects: service, safety, and price. These are closely associated with the international students' psychological satisfaction and their social adaptation to a new environment.

5.3.2.1.2.1 Service

Quality of service in public transport is very important to the international students. A total of 5 participants gave positive responses to the transport in Tasmania. As an Arabic student participant (Student 1) said, *"Public transport in Tasmania is good ...the bus is very cheap and there are still buses till night. That's good."*

However, there are 14 interviewees giving negative responses to the service of Tasmanian public transport. Three main problems raised in the interviews: inadequate numbers of bus stops, few transport choices, and low frequencies. As a

Chinese student participant (Student 12) said, *“There are few bus stops in Launceston, especially in some rural areas. Sometimes it is hard to find a bus stop”*. Besides, some participants considered that there were few transport choices in Tasmania. A Japanese student participant (Student 5) responded, *“There is no train, not enough taxis”*, and a Chinese student (Student 9) held a similar attitude, *“There is no underground as well”*. Apart from few bus stops and few choices of transport, a low frequency of public transport in Tasmania is the third salient problem emerging from the data. Most participants complained that the intervals between buses are too long.

When I first came here, I was so uncomfortable because of the very long time term between two buses. In my country, people only need to wait four or five minutes, they don’t need to memorize the timetable of such services. In Tasmania, we have to memorize the timetable or information of the next bus service. (Student 10)

Other participants said that there were fewer buses on weekends and public holidays, which seriously impacted on these students’ travelling. A Chinese student participant (Student 3) said, *“at weekends, we don’t have choice. We have to stay home”*. Another Chinese student gave a more detailed explanation,

Especially on holiday, or Sunday, it is very hard to catch a bus. I was living in a place where there was just one bus. And on Sundays, there was just one bus per hour. You finish your work at around five o’clock, if you go down, you cannot come back at night. (Student 14)

5.3.2.1.2.2 Security

Security is another important factor which relating to the quality of transport services. An Indian student participant (Student 2) expressed his worries about the safety issue, *“And also I cannot study after 5 o’clock, and also I don’t think it is safe waiting in the bus stop at night”*. Such a factor really influences the psychological wellbeing of these international students in an unfamiliar environment.

5.3.2.1.2.3 Price

According to data collected, most participants were basically satisfied with the price of public transport except for the taxi services. A Pakistan student participant (Student 18) responded: *“(Transport in Tasmania) is good...the bus is very cheap... If you take a taxi, it is very expensive, so I try to avoid using taxis and to choose other types of transport”*.

5.3.2.1.3 Diet

Food is another main factor affecting interviewees' transition to the new environment. Food is a basic essential to sustain human existence and maintain health. Moreover, with the influence of natural and cultural factors, food can be considered a reflection of local culture, customs, and social values. Therefore, adaptation to new food influences the students' adaption to the new environment. In other words, the enjoyment of Australian foods would help these international students to easily adapt to local society and culture. “Unavailability of their ethnic food” and “lack of traditional family support”, are two issues which emerged in the interview.

5.3.2.1.3.1 Unavailability of their ethnic food

“Unavailability of their ethnic food” was mentioned by some interviewees, especially those who are from Arabic or Muslim countries. For cultural and religious reasons, it is relatively hard for those students to get suitable food in Tasmania. A staff participant (Administrative staff 1) stated, *“People from Asia, especially from Arabia, they are struggling to find proper food, even though there are a lot available here, but students still cannot get they want”*. An Arabic student participant (Student 1) said, *“Food for us, Muslim, it is difficult. We have to look for some special food just like the Jews, Muslim and Jews always do the same way”*. Also, high prices and low quality of their ethnic foods make it hard to find proper food. Another reason which was mentioned by participants was that Tasmania was a regional area, resulting in less diversity of foods compared to other big cities in Australia. As a Chinese student (Student 3) said, *“It is not very convenient, if you want to buy something; it's not as convenient as you living in Sydney or Melbourne”*.

5.3.2.1.3.2 Lack of traditional family support

“Lack of traditional family support” was another issue emerging from the interviews. Since most international students are living independently in the host country and they lack traditional family support in dietary needs, so they have to look after themselves. Thirteen out of twenty student participants gave responses that they now usually cook at home and seldom go out for dinner. Finance and health are two primary considerations. Cooking at home is much cheaper than having dinner in a restaurant, and also home-cooked meals are much healthier than other meals, especially “fast food”.

5.3.2.2 Subtheme 2: Academic environment

Nearly all student interviewees pointed out that the difficulty of adapting to an unfamiliar academic environment was one of the most salient problems they and other students encountered in a new tertiary context. According to their responses, “language barriers”, “unfamiliar educational style”, “intensive workload” and “pressure” are five main problems which occur in the new academic environment.

5.3.2.2.1 Language barriers

The problem with the most responses from the participants was the language barriers. Fourteen out of twenty five participants pointed out that inadequate English proficiency was a great obstacle to the international students’ academic performance. They have difficulty in understanding lectures, completing their assignments, and communicating with teachers and other students as a result of their poor English ability. As a Chinese student participant (Student 12) responded, *“I feel hard to understand the talk in the tutorial, especially when the teacher hands out some topics, something like that”*. Another Indonesian student participant (Student 7) said, *“My biggest challenge in my study is language. English is not my first language, so I have to double check the meaning of the sentences or everything”*. Academic staff commonly agreed that English language presented a great difficulty for international students studying in an English speaking country. One of those interviewed (Academic staff 3) gave a response that *“I was thinking the major problem is language...I think that might contribute to misunderstandings*

in the lectures and classroom as well. I think from academic perspective that would be a big problem”.

Three issues emerged from a further analysis and showed that “academic writing”, “Australian accent”, and “varieties of English” are the greatest language problems encountered by international students.

5.3.2.2.1.1 Academic writing

Nine participants pointed out that “academic writing” is the biggest difficulty for most international students. Some student participants mentioned that they found it difficult to use academic wording when writing reports or assignments to express their opinions in an academic way. Also, they have difficulty in adapting to other writing genres in English. A Chinese student participant (Student 3) said that *“academic writing is quite difficult for me. I don’t know how to use appropriate words to express my opinions in an academic way. So maybe it is one of the biggest problems”*. Another Korean student (Student 17) said that *“I found there are differences to write an academic report and other writing components like email, reflection and something else. It is very hard”*.

According to participants’ responses, international students also have grammatical difficulties in arranging their writing structure and making arguments structurally and logically. A staff member participant (Administrative staff 1) mentioned that *“in academic writing, a piece of work in English does cause some challenges, also some students find difficulties in the writing structures”*. Another staff member participant (Academic staff 2) also stated that *“overseas students would feel difficult in how to complete a piece of work, and they don’t know what is going to be involved into a piece of work and how to arrange arguments in their writing components”*.

5.3.2.2.1.2 Australian accent

Two international student participants noted that they had difficulty in understanding the Australian accent especially when they have just arrived in Australia. It took time to get used to it.

Language, especially accents, international students might have trouble with Australian accents. I am international too. Now I am living here, I still have

some trouble with accents. And some persons are too embarrassed to ask people to repeat, which would cause some situations with struggle with understanding the language. (Administrative staff 1)

The locals speak very fast and this was also mentioned by another two participants. As the Pakistan student participant (Student 18) said, *“Also, local people talk very fast, you cannot catch them easily. But if you say “please speak slowly”, they understand it. They never mind it. Language is another issue”*. Also Australia is a typical multi-cultural country and many lecturers at the university are not from Australia or Tasmania. Thus, the students hear different accents. International students who are studying in Australia have to get used to not only the various Australian accents but also other accents.

5.3.2.2.1.3 Varieties of English

There are a range of varieties in English language among English speaking countries. These varieties include differences in pronunciation, spelling, sentence construction, idiom, and so on. Such linguistic differences have become one of the biggest barriers for the international students whose prior English learning did not cover Australian English. A staff member mentioned this point in the interview:

So that the actual way we use words or the way we construct sentences can even be slightly different in different English speaking countries. That is a fact of language. ... If you have a teacher from America, you learn a different type of English that’s not spoken in Australia. (Administrative staff 2)

5.3.2.2.2 5.3.2.3.2. Unfamiliarity with the Australian tertiary educational style

According to interviewees’ responses, another factor in the new academic environment is the unfamiliar educational style. Such responses are mostly given by East Asian students whose prior educational experiences are very different from the Australian educational style. As a Chinese student participant said,

I think because I am studying overseas, there are many challenges, but now study is my biggest challenges, I have to face a lot of challenges in my study,

because I am not very familiar with the criteria in this academic area. I just get a litter bit instructions. Now it's my biggest challenge. (Student 13)

There are three aspects which were mentioned by participants, including “student-centred and independent learning”, “emphasis on the learning process”, and “the assignment requirement”.

5.3.2.2.2.1 Student-centred and independent learning

Australian education is characterized by student-centred and independent learning (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Wong, 2004). Contrastively, most international students, especially those who came from East Asian countries reported that teacher-centred and dependent learning were the prominent characteristics of education in their home countries. In the interviews, 15 out of 20 international student participants expressed that they feel unprepared for the unfamiliar academic environment. A Korean student participant (Student 17) noted that “(In Australia) *If the students want to ask questions, they just ask. But in my country, teacher just pass their knowledge to us, we cannot argue or discuss between students and lecturers*”. A Malaysia student (Student 8) gave a response that “*They (Australian teachers) won't give you answer straight away, they will tell you or ask you questions, so they get you think about your project, or about your design, and from then on, you continue on*”.

5.3.2.2.2.2 Emphasis on the learning process

Participants also pointed out that Australian education puts more emphasis on the learning process rather than the results. However, in East Asian countries, educators emphasize that the students' results were priority and less attention is paid to their learning process. International students have to adjust themselves to this new educational requirement when they are studying in Australia.

It's different from Malaysia, because every result you can see is at the end of project. We are here seems like take about the process, so how do you come with the whole building based on one idea. They want to see how you think is true before the coming of the result. So it's both thinking process and results they are looking at. And I supposed that they are something new to

us. Initially, for me, I want to do very well, but after that, once getting hand of that, it's still manageable, I think. (Student 8)

5.3.2.2.3 Different assignment requirements

According to the participants' responses, international students also have difficulty in meeting assignment requirements in Australian university because the requirements are more and less different from other tertiary system in other countries. The usage of reference was highly discussed by the participants because some international students' prior referencing requirements in their home countries were greatly different from that in Australia. A sensitive issue which is related to referencing is plagiarism. Thus, how to use references properly and avoid plagiarism is very important for those students transferring into an Australian tertiary academic context. As Korean student participant (Student 17) noted, *"Another thing is the reference. In my country, if you find something, you just copy either from internet or friends. But it is impossible here. It could be regarded as plagiarism here"*. A Chinese student participant also gave a similar response on reference:

Also the reference is big differences. You know in China, in university, I remember when I studied in the university. I didn't find any reference to finish my assignment. We don't need reference. Even for the graduate essay, I can't remember I used reference. We didn't use that. (Student 20)

5.3.2.2.3 Intense workload

A total of 7 out of 25 participants noted that a huge workload resulting from frequent tests, an overload of assignments, and intensive courses brought an enormous pressure on the international students and negatively contributed to their wellbeing. As a Malaysian student participant (Student 8) said, *"Everything got due next week or a week after, so every time got something to do, research on, something to think about, something to work out"*. An administrative staff gave the following response:

Another academic thing, for example, in AMC, their courses are very intense, it can be very stressful for students, they have to study huge amount of

material within a very short time, and different models, two or three exams in one week, sometimes they have to do exams both in the morning and the afternoon on different topic, so it is a big challenge. It must pass, but it is stressful for a lot of students to this intensive course. (Administrative staff 1)

5.3.2.2.4 Pressure

Some international students often feel great pressure when they find that local students achieve good academic results because of the advantage in the use of the English language and familiarity with the Australian educational style. Other international students who are better in English and an academic performance also create great pressure for them. One student participants gave the following responses:

And I have all new classmates, and they all are talkative, and they all have good ideas except me. I have to prepare one paper though the whole night and get up so early to prepare, because I cannot talk in class, it was horrible. So I feel so depressed last month, and just thinking 'I cannot do anything', 'I cannot do anything good. (Student 14)

5.3.2.2.5 Benefits

Apart from the negative in academic difficulties, participants also gave responses on the benefits of studying abroad. Three most beneficial aspects are mentioned by these participants: “academic achievement”, “acquisition of abilities and skills” and “establishment of social networking”.

Two participants gave response that it was the highest academic achievement to complete their studies and obtain an academic degree or certificate. Another five participants noted that many useful abilities and skills could be acquired and well developed abroad. These abilities and skills mentioned include English language, critical and analytical thinking, communication skills, academic writing skills, computing skills, and cross-cultural skills. These abilities and skills can be well developed in the process of study. Among them, English language received the

highest responses. Four participants said that their English level had improved studying in an English-speaking country. As a Korean student participant (Student 10) said, *“Because English is quite important not only in my countries, but also in other countries, so English ability is quite important. So studying abroad, I can improve my English ability, that’s good. That is an advantage of studying in Australia”*.

Besides, there were four participants motioned that establishing a broad social networking was a great benefit studying abroad. They considered that studying abroad was a precious opportunity to make friends and they thought that the friendship established during the time at university would be valuable for their whole life. A Chinese student participant (Student 3) said that *“Another thing is I make some friends, and also I know some professors in this area, so my networking is expanding”*. A staff participant also gave the response that:

Friendships are made in the campus here between Indian, Chinese, Thai and Australian; I think that is one of the most beautiful things about the education in the foreign country. When you go back, those friendships would be there for your whole life. (Academic staff 3)

5.3.2.3 Subtheme 3: Socio-cultural environment

For those students who are studying abroad, the educational transition might be considered as a cultural transition to some extent. Successful adaption to the unfamiliar socio-cultural environment is beneficial to releasing psychological pressure. However, from the participants’ responses, it is not easy to fully understand and adapt to the host culture in a short time because the culture itself is multi-layered and complicated, and also culture is something that is unteachable. We “learned” our own culture from the previous generations or other sources unconsciously and we are unaware when we inherit our cultural and convey it to the next generation. But when we transferred from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar one, culture differences become obvious and culture shock caused by these cultural differences would be an unavoidable result. An administration staff gave the following responses,

It is really hard to live in it to truly understand it...and you cannot really fully understand. So it become important to understands how to interrupt people socially, how to interrupt people even in the shopping centre, what might be an acceptable behaviour when you are shopping in one country might not be acceptable behaviour in another country. ...So there are lots of sort of things, it's very hard when you move into a new culture setting to understand those because it is safe. And it is hard for local people to even explain them because when you grow up with them. (Administrative staff 2)

Also, intercultural communication would be more complicated in Australia as Australia is a typical immigrant country characterized by multiculturalism, and thus international students who are studying in Australia have to understand not only Australian local culture and other cultures. The socio-cultural features can be considered as an opportunity but also a challenge

For example, a student from China who is studying here would have some experiences in how to mix with Indian students, for example, so again it is not just about Australian cultures; also have to learn to mix with students from other cultures as well. (Academic staff 1)

5.3.3 Theme 3: Social contact

The third theme which emerged from the data analysis is social contact. On this issue, staff participants had a general consensus that only a minority of international students have a broad base of social contacts with the local community - making friends with the local people and taking part in new activities. However, most international students preferred staying within their own ethnic group to having more contact with the local society. Staff considered that whether outgoing or not, it depends on the personality of these students and their network of friends. Student participants' responses generally agreed with staff member's perception. They said that international students do have some opportunities to take part in local activities and develop contacts locally, but it is still not easy to

integrate due to various barriers. Therefore, “Barriers” has become one of subtheme which gave a detailed explanation to this phenomenon.

Table 5.5. Theme 3: Social contact

Theme 3: Social contact
<p>Subtheme 1: Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Cultural differences</i> ▪ <i>Language</i> ▪ <i>Misunderstanding</i> ▪ <i>Religion</i> ▪ <i>Psychological worriers</i>
Subtheme 2: Racial discrimination

5.3.3.1 Subtheme 1: barriers

The following are five salient barriers which were mentioned by participants in the interview: “cultural differences”, “language competency”, “intercultural misunderstanding”, “religious differences”, and “psychological worriers”.

5.3.3.1.1 Cultural differences

Among them, “cultural differences” received the most responses, which mean that many student participants agreed that the greatest barrier obstructing their effective contact with the community is the issue of cultural differences. Most of them found that it was very demanding for them to make effective communication with new community as they do not fully understand the tradition, customs, values and the popular culture. Inadequate knowledge of the local culture seriously hindered their integration into the local society. As a Chinese student participant said,

I think there are some cultural factors. For English speaking countries, they have some kinds of culture, even you are from America, or you are from Europe, all speaking English. They are experienced the same thing, they are listening to the same band, they are seeing the same TV show. We were really doing something really different. (Student 14)

5.3.3.1.2 Language competency

“Language competency” is another significant barrier and strongly discussed by most interviewees. Inadequate language proficiency not only greatly obstructs a student’s academic progress but also limits his/her social contact. In fact, language competency not only includes an adequate knowledge of grammar, but also involves social linguistic competency and a knowledge of the host culture (Arthur, 2004). Since many international students lack knowledge of the local culture, society, and values, it is hard for them to effectively communicate with this new community. Deficient English language competency is therefore a great barrier negatively impacting on international students trying to adapt to the new socio-cultural environment.

5.3.3.1.3 Intercultural misunderstanding

Apart from “cultural differences” and “language”, another reason why international students have no meaningful social contact with the host community is that there is an existing “intercultural misunderstanding”. There are such individuals, who are reluctant to offer friendship with international students because they have little understanding of other cultures or even have a biased view of other countries. In turn, some international students feel that the local people are not friendly and are not easy to approach. Such misunderstandings have erected a great barrier which makes international students keep their distance.

I think there are some misconceptions about meaning of my culture. Maybe they are not having a completed view or knowledge about my culture, they may have some misconceptions because of media or something. Maybe they are very nice and can be friends, but not good friends. (Student 2)

5.3.3.1.4 Religion

Some participants noted that “religion” was one of the barriers which restrict contact with the local community. These students’ religious beliefs and values would restrict their behaviours pattern, which would result in consciously keeping their distance from the local community. One Muslim student gave the following response:

I am Muslim, I don't drink, I don't go club, so I am away from those parties with a lot of drinking. For me, it is not possible to enjoy everything which local people enjoy. ... I think religion is the most aspect for the Muslims, not for other religions. For Muslims, it is not easy to make friends with Australians, or with local people. Some Australian people, especially teenagers are not friendly with you. (Student 18)

5.3.3.1.5 Psychological worries

Lastly, many participants expressed the “psychological worries” that occur in the process of social contact with the local community. These have become one of the important factors obstructing the international students’ adaption to Australian society. From the participants’ responses, they usually feel shame, embarrassment, discomfort and even fear when communicating with the local people because of their poor English or the lack of knowledge of the host culture. Such psychological worries would bring these students under great psychological pressure. As a Pakistan student participant (Student 18) said, *“Also from international students aspect, we think we are foreigners, and we feel uncomfortable with communicate with local people. We don't try to communicate with local people, keep them separate”*. Therefore, one staff (Administrative staff 2) noted that *“some students don't want to make any contact or they don't want to explore their new social cultural setting because it is too scary”*.

5.3.3.2 Subtheme 2: Racial discrimination

Racial discrimination is a sensitive but unavoidable topic discussed in reference to intercultural social contact. According to the participants’ responses, there was a divergence on this issue. Among 25 interviewees, 13 participants gave the response that international students had experienced racial discrimination in Australia, whilst 11 participants had no experience of such discrimination.

According to these responses, the racial discrimination they encounter usually occurred off campus in the form of verbal abuse, mostly from teenagers. Few students reported that they had experienced racial discrimination on campus.

However some students pointed out that the discrimination that occurred on campus might not be as obvious as discrimination off campus. Also, from the participants' responses, their skin colour would be one of obvious physical feature attributing to racial discrimination. In the interview, some student participants shared their experiences with the interviewer. As a Chinese student participant said,

(I have experienced racial discrimination) a couple of times. I got screams in the street, and one time when I make a phone call with my family in the city centre. We have a couple of teenagers twelve or thirteen years old, they shouted and said, 'Are you fucking from Hong Kong, go back to your own country'. They just don't understand and whoever they just see, they think you are Chinese, because the population from Chinese mainland is huge compared to the other countries. So whoever come here with Asian look, they think you are Chinese and rich. The adults are ok, but the teenagers have more spare time too, so they just wondering in the street and shouting to Asians. (Student 4)

When I stay in Hobart, there are a lot of Korean friends who get some terrorism. They just walked through the door, walked through the way, some Australians threw eggs to them. When I went to Casino, an Australian girl said "yellow monkey, yellow monkey" not to me, but to my friends. I think in Australia, if they see somebody don't speak English properly, they said some bad words to them. They thought the guy couldn't understand what they said. (Student 10)

According to participants' responses, such abusive behaviour had a harmful effect on such international students, but most students tended to ignore such abuses. There are two points raised by these students: firstly, they do not know from whom they can seek support when encountering such events; secondly, they tend to avoid being dragged into any trouble so that they can protect themselves in an unfamiliar environment. A Malaysian student participant (Student 8) said that, *"In generally,*

yes, you get discrimination. People would abuse on you for no reason, but for me, I just try to ignore these abuses because I don't want to have conflict directly".

On the other hand, some student participants gave completely opposite responses as they had not experienced racial discrimination in Tasmania. Analysing their responses resulted in the interviews found that those students consciously kept their distance from the local community and therefore had less experience of racial discrimination. Also, participants' responses indicated that those students who have a different perception of racial discrimination experienced and reported less racial discrimination. A Pakistan student's response gave a good explanation of their perception,

Also you are not sensitive; they are not feeling I am foreigner. That is easily to feel discrimination. For example, somebody they are not friendly by nature. If you think they are unfriendly because you are foreigner. It is your own problem, it is a contribution to how do you perceive. Maybe it is their nature, not unfriendly. (Student 18)

5.3.4 Theme 4: Psychological wellbeing

Previous data analysis indicated that the transition from a familiar into an unfamiliar environment was a complicated process with various challenges and difficulties. In the process of transition and adaptation, these students' psychological responses have become an important issue discussed by participants in the interviews. Data analysis found that staff member participants held a common view that international students' psychological responses greatly depended on their personality. Those who are inclined to be extroverted would have relatively fewer negative psychological experiences, whilst those who tend to be introverted would have higher negative psychological responses. Student participants' responses generally supported staff member's point of views. Besides, staff participants also pointed out that issues rose in the process of international students' transition to a new environment (Theme 2) and social contact (Theme 3) were closely related to their psychological wellbeing. It indicated that these

students' psychological responses to the new environment are not single issues but interrelate to other factors discussed under other themes.

According to the interview data, four salient psychological problems are emerged. The four problems are depression, homesickness, loneliness and anxiety. In the next sections, the four problems are in the form of four subthemes and given more detailed discussion.

Table 5.6. Theme 4: Psychological wellbeing

Theme 4: Psychological responses	
▪ Subtheme 1: Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Encountering with academic difficulties</i> ▪ <i>Special occasions</i> ▪ <i>Being homesick</i>
▪ Subtheme 2: Homesickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Encountering difficulties</i> ▪ <i>Being sick</i>
▪ Subtheme 3: Loneliness	
▪ Subtheme 4: Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Financial concerns</i>

5.3.4.1 Subtheme 1: Depression

Depression is one of the psychological problems highlighted to by participants. Living in an unfamiliar country and faced with various difficulties, international students tend to be depressed in the process of adjustment. A Korean student participant (Student 17) reported his frequent depression, "*Sometimes, once a week, or once two week, I don't know why I feel depressed*". Although his bouts of depression are much more frequent than the average, depressive symptoms have become an unavoidable psychological problem encountered by most international students.

According to their responses, international students are mostly inclined to be depressed in these three circumstances: "encountering academic difficulties", "on some special moments" and "feeling homesick".

5.3.4.1.1 *Encountering academic difficulties*

Most student participants reported that the most significant reason of depression is from the pressure caused by their studies. Academic achievement is highly valued by most international students because successfully completing their course is their main purpose of studying abroad (Bochner, 1973; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Klineberg & Hull, 1979). However, since being unfamiliar with the Australian educational system, they usually feel the pressing demands to adapt to the new academic environment. According to the participants', "language barrier" "intense workload", and "pressure" are three prominent issues attributing to their depression.

The language barrier is a stressor resulting in the international students' depression. Student participants' responses indicted that they strongly desired to communicate with local people, including their lectures and classmates, without any barriers, but it appeared there are many difficulties resulting from weak English competency. Under these circumstances, they usually feel depressed. As a Korean student said that,

I told you before, I want to make something, I want to speak well, and I want to have a conversation with local people without any problems. Sometimes when I listening they are talking, I cannot understand. I feel very depressed when I cannot understand. (Student 17)

Some student participants pointed out that they usually feel depressed when they are under a heavy workload. A Chinese student (Student 4) gave such response, "*if there is a lot of tasks to be done in a short time, I would get pressure and feel depressed*".

Apart from language barriers and intense workloads, international students are usually under pressure when comparing with other fellow students, especially with those who have an advantage in usage of English and achieve better assignment and examination results. Those students' good academic performance would bring great pressure on international student and cause them to be depressed.

And I have all new classmates, and they all are talkative, and they all have good ideas except me. I have to prepare one paper though the whole night and get up so early to prepare, because I cannot talk in class, it was horrible. So I feel so depressed last month, and just thinking 'I cannot do anything', 'I cannot do anything good'. (Student 14)

5.3.4.1.2 Special occasions

In the interview, student participants mentioned two special occasions when they usually feel depressed: one was at festive times and another was when feeling sick. As international students in this study are studying in this remote island which is far away from their home country, it is easy for them to feel depressed especially during some important festivals. As an Indian student participant (Student 1) said, *"Sometimes in some festivals in my country, I am not here to celebrate with my family, which will make me depressed"*. Another occasion they are depressed usually occurs when they are sick. Physical illnesses are more likely to develop negative psychological responses, so international students' depression at such times is understandable.

5.3.4.1.3 Being homesick

One student participant mentioned that he usually felt depressed when they were homesick. Homesickness occurring in a remote country could easily lead to depression. The Arabic student (Student 1) said that, *"I feel very depressed sometimes especially I think about my own country and my town"*.

5.3.4.2 Subtheme 2: Homesickness

The participants' responses noted that homesickness was one of the most salient psychological problems experienced by international students. However, there were still some student participants who had the opposite responses. The data indicated that those students who have family here had less homesickness, and those students who have the means of frequent travel between the host country and home country (e.g., returning more than once a year) felt less homesick than other students. Except for the two above instances, most students had experienced

homesickness when living in an unfamiliar foreign country and felt most homesick under three circumstances.

5.3.4.2.1 Experiencing difficulties

Three student participants responded that they usually felt homesick when experiencing difficulties in general living, academic, and social contacts. For those students who are studying abroad, they tend to be psychologically vulnerable when in trouble and are liable to lead to a negative emotional outcome. Also, social support might be less effective in the host country compared with that in their home country as they would be able to easily receive support from their family or other sources of support obtainable at home. Hence, they are liable to feel homesick under this circumstance, which negatively related to their wellbeing.

5.3.4.2.2 Being sick

Two student participants said they feel homesick when being ill. Here illness refers to physical sickness. A staff member participant (Administration staff 2) gave this explanation, *“Students who feel so homesick when they are physically sick, and they want to go home, the only place they will be happy would be home”*.

5.3.4.3 Subtheme 3: Loneliness

Data indicated loneliness was one of the psychological problems frequently encountered by most student participants (12 out of 20). However, there are 8 students with the opposite response in that they rarely felt lonely in Tasmania. Results of the data analysis showed that those who gave fewer responses to loneliness are students who have many friends or who have family here with a solid support group. For those who felt lonely, *“Not many friends”*, and *“homesickness”* are two main reasons.

5.3.4.3.1 Not many friends

Loneliness can be relieved by having friends' company, especially in an unfamiliar environment. However, for various reasons, it is not easy for international students

to make friends in a culturally different country. As one Chinese student participant said in the interview,

But you know at the beginning after I came here, I didn't have many friends, I just knew my housemate and some students in ELC. At that time, sometime, especially during weekend and holiday, I feel a little lonely, because nobody can stay with me and share my opinions and my worries. (Student 20)

5.3.4.3.2 Homesickness

Apart from the “friends” factor, “homesickness” is another reason which is closely related to the international students’ loneliness. A Malaysian student participant (Student 8) gave the response that, *“It can be lonely sometimes, because your family is not here, and your friends where you come from is not here, so it takes time to get local, even the Malaysian themselves”*.

5.3.4.4 Subtheme 4: Anxiety

In the interview, 23 participants expressed anxiety as a factor in the process of adjustment to the new environment. According to their responses, “financial worries” was the underlying cause.

5.3.4.4.1 Financial concerns

Although financial preparation was made before departure, most students still have financial concerns owing to the growth of tuition fees, lack of scholarship, and increasing of cost of living in Tasmania. Sometimes unexpected events such as an examination failure, visa extension, sickness, accidents, etc. can directly cause a financial strain. If the student is unwilling to overburden their family, it can easily provoke a personal anxious reaction. The followings are two quotations from student participants:

...before I found a part-time job, I was so worried. Because when I first arrived, I thought I could study in University directly, but because of my low English ability, I had to take general English course, and DEAP, and then university, which is beyond my budget. (Student 5)

I think the biggest challenge is financial problem. I don't give burden to my family to support my tuition. I am trying to solve it and having money. I am trying to pay my entire course fee and support myself, it is the biggest challenge for me. (Student 15)

Some students opt to look for a part-time job in order to reduce the financial pressure. But as some student participants (5 out of 20) complained, it was not easy to find part-time jobs in Tasmania because there are less work opportunities in Tasmania compared with the mainland. And even if they are fortunate to find a job, how to effectively balance between their study and work also become a problem. Therefore, dealing with work-related issues would definitely impact on their wellbeing.

The first thing is financial thing. Some students just come here and realize that they can afford yourself (themselves). You have to find a part-time job. But I think you need time to work, also you need time to study. So you must delete some time in relax and sleeping, that maybe affect your health. If you don't have strong financial support, think twice before you come here. (Student 12)

5.3.5 Theme 5: Coping strategies

Through the data analysis, the theme of coping strategies emerged from participants' responses. The results indicated that most international student participants adopted a diverse range of coping strategies to overcome physical, psychological and social barriers which occurred in the process of adaptation to an unfamiliar environment. Almost all student participants gave the response that they tended to solve problems by themselves before seeking support from others. The reason is that, as a Chinese student participant (Student 4) said, "*Most of time, I solve the problems by myself.... (because) they (others) cannot really solve the problems, you got to solve the problem with your own action*". It can be seen that most international students tend to be independent when in the foreign country.

According to participants' responses, coping strategies are categorized into two categories: change and adjustment.

Table 5.7 Theme 5: Coping strategies

Theme 5: Coping strategies	
Subtheme 1: change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Planning</i> ▪ <i>Observing</i> ▪ <i>Taking action</i> ▪ <i>Suppression</i>
Subtheme 2: Adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Acceptance</i> ▪ <i>Religion</i> ▪ <i>Distraction</i> ▪ <i>Positive reappraisal</i>

5.3.5.1 Subtheme 1: Change

“Change” refers to those coping strategies which tend to overcome difficulties by taking direct action to make a change to the outside world. “Planning”, “observing”, “taking actions”, and “suppression” are four coping strategies used by these participants. They usually adopted these strategies when they thought that problems they encountered could be solved or the situation could be changed by themselves.

5.3.5.1.1 Planning

In the interviews, 6 student participants pointed out that making plans was the first step in solving problems and they frequently made plans to deal with the problems they had encountered whether in their study or in their daily life. A Pakistan student participant mentioned that,

If I have problems, it can be my study, it can be my personal issue, so I will make a plan, if it is possible to do it...if the problem can be addressed in practical way, I will definitely to make a plan. (Student 18)

5.3.5.1.2 Observing

In the interviews, one student participant noted that she usually observed others who might be in a similar situation and learned how to deal with similar problems.

The strategy of observation emerged and was considered as a reference and preparation before taking action. The Vietnamese student (Student 6) said, *“(I) try to read a lot and see what and how people coped with the difficulty and try to follow them”*.

5.3.5.1.3 Taking action

“Taking action” is usually considered as the most active strategy used to deal with problems directly. One student participant said she took this strategy when she thought that she had enough confidence in solving the problem and made a change in the situation.

5.3.5.1.4 Suppression

The strategy of suppression emerged from one student participant’s response. She noted that she would try to avoid being distracted by other events and issues in order to concentrate all their effort on problems-solving. The following is the quotation from the Chinese student (Student 12): *“Just push me hard to learn more, and cancel all the relaxing time, sleep late and get up early, make everything simple, so you can have more time to study”*.

5.3.5.2 Subtheme 2: Adjustment

“Adjustment” is another category of the coping strategy. Strategies under this category are usually used when people think that that they have to adjust or adapt to an unchangeable situation. Four strategies emerged from participants’ responses: acceptance, religion, distraction, and positive reappraisal. 5.3.5.2.1.

Acceptance

Acceptance as a strategy received the most response. A total of 10 student participants said that they would be inclined to accept the reality when encountering such unchangeable difficulties as cultural differences, education system differences, and a different way of thinking. The Korean student participant said,

But sometimes, I found the system is a little bit different from our country, so in that case, I think I should accept it, because ... Australia have rules, and sometimes it could be different. Now I am living in Australia, I have to accept it. (Student 10)

5.3.5.2.1 Distraction

Distraction as a strategy was frequently used by participants as it was highlighted by 7 students in the interviews. These students would try to distract themselves by jogging, listening to music or watching movies in order to get the problem out of their mind. It is an effective strategy of releasing the pressure in the short term and can possibly leave them enough time to make a plan.

5.3.5.2.2 Religion

“Religion” as another strategy emerged from the interviews. A total of 4 student participants pointed out that they would seek spiritual support from their religion when they were confronted by difficulties. According to participants’ responses, relying on religion could bring spiritual peace into the depths of their heart, which was very helpful in relieving their stress and supporting their minds. One administration staff said in the interview that

Sometimes students’ religion can affect their health and wellbeing, because if they are very deeply religious a lot of mental health issue can be deal with through their religion, and their contact and support from people with the same beliefs. (Administration staff 2)

An Indian student participant gave his experience in obtaining support from his religious beliefs. I am really religious person. My religion can support me spiritually. I don’t condemn something. My religion always helps me when I was lonely. The philosophy of my religion can answer many problems, even ordinary problems. So far, I can manage it, and in the future also. (Student 2)

5.3.5.2.3 Positive reappraisal

“Positive reappraisal” is one of the coping strategies mentioned by 3 student participants in the interviews. According to their responses, they would feel less stressed and become more optimistic when they looked at things in a positive way. This positive attitude appears quite useful in releasing pressure when these students are in some difficult or unchangeable circumstances.

5.3.6 Theme 6: Social support

Apart from coping by themselves, these students also try to seek support from others when they meet difficulties with which they might not be able to solve. An accessible and effective social support plays an important role in assisting these students’ adaption to an unfamiliar environment. According to participants’ responses, they usually sought and obtained support from the following four sources - “university”, “friends”, “family”, and “local community”.

Table 5.8. Theme 6: Social support

Theme 6: Social support	
Subtheme 1: University	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Academic support</i>▪ <i>Administrative support</i>
Subtheme 2: Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Advisory support</i>▪ <i>Emotional support</i>
Subtheme 3: Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Emotional support</i>▪ <i>Financial support</i>▪ <i>Advisory support</i>
Subtheme 4: Community	

5.3.6.1 Support from university

5.3.6.1.1 Academic support

The university played an important role in providing academic support and administrative support to international students. Academic support would be the

most important parts of university support. In the interviews, most of the student participants (16 out of 20) gave the responses that would seek support from their lecturer, tutors and/or other academic staff when experiencing difficulties in their study. An interviewed academic staff also said,

I think the main support we are asked for is academic support. A quite number of students asked for academic support. ...they asked in terms of discussing assignments, discussing their written components. Sending you emails all the time, trying to arrange a meeting often and regularly.
(Academic staff 2)

Half of student participants gave a positive evaluation on the academic support they get from the university. These participants said that their lecturers were very willing to provide them with support and in turn they are very satisfied with the support. A Chinese student participant gave the following responses,

My unit coordinator and my supervisor are good. They are caring and very friendly, and if I have some questions, I can always contact them to talk about, and deal with problems, so I think it is good. (Student 20)

However, 3 student participants showed their dissatisfactions with the academic support provided by the university in the interview. Two salient problems were given: some international students did not think that they received enough attention from their lecturers or tutors; and others felt they were treated differently or even unfairly from the local students. These problems made them feel greatly excluded in the unfamiliar academic environment. A Chinese student participant stated her experience:

I think we are not got enough concerns from our teacher. Sometime they explain something, I cannot understand clearly...I think they should consider that I have disability in using the language. I am not same as local students. When I ask the faculty to support, they said you are international students,

we are not in charge of you, you should go to international students' service and ask for help. Suddenly, I feel I don't belong to the university. (Student 12)

5.3.6.1.2 Administrative support

Apart from academic support, the university has set up an office – International Service which specifically provides support for the current and prospective international students. Two administrative staff members interviewed in this study are from this department. According to their responses, international students usually came to the International Service and seek support for practical problems or problems which they might find difficult to solve by themselves and/or with the help of their friends.

Most people come here for more practical thing. I want to change my enrolment, or visa problems, or what I can change my course. Why most of students come to see us for such basic and administrative things. (Administrative staff 1)

But certainly there will always be students who need to come to us because they may be problem to their friends, their church, whatever they cannot help with him because it is too big. (Administrative staff 2)

Most student participants' responses agreed with the two administrative staff as they did have experiences in seeking support from the International Services. Based on students' feedback, some of them were satisfied with the services provided by the International Service. As a Malaysian student participant said,

It is helpful in many ways in terms that they can help in my study; they teach me how to do certain things, in terms of security, and activities. They do provide, organize trips, events and participate...So in general, I am quite happy with what the uni providing. (Student 8)

However, 2 student participants were still not satisfied with the administrative support provided by the university. These students complain included: they

received slow responses from the university; and they did not get clear information from the university. A Chinese student gave the following response:

But sometimes their direction are not quite useful, because when I have some problems, they would say you should go to see this person or that person, They all said you should go for another person. I don't know. Maybe the institution like regulations or something like that. (Student 3)

5.3.6.2 Support from friends

Peer support is another important source of support in the process of adaptation to the new environment. Most student participants considered friends as their first source of support when they have problems. Friends usually provide support in advisory and emotional aspects.

5.3.6.2.1 Advisory support

According to the participants' responses, advisory support claimed by international students was wide ranging: seeking accommodation, looking for part-time jobs, car repairs, checking grammatical mistakes for their assignments, etc. A Chinese student participant said,

I think if I meet some problems, firstly I will ask my friends whom I consider as my best friends, to help me. I remembered that when I just arrived in Launceston, I stayed in a bag pack. And then I just asked my friend who was in Launceston to help to find an accommodation. She was very helpful and found a share-house which was close to uni within one week. (Student 20)

5.3.6.2.2 Emotional support

Emotional support is another important part of peer support. Great pressure caused by an unfamiliar environment might bring various negative emotions to these international students. Peer support can relieve their stress and cheer them up to overcome difficulties. Friends easily understand each other because they are under the same situation or have the same experience. Hence, emotional support from friends becomes very important in times of difficulty. Many participants

mentioned that they did not feel lonely because of their friends' companionship and encouragement. As a Chinese student participant said, *"And I also got some friends here who shared the same believes and shared the same experiences. It's ok, I get a lot of times to talk them. I don't really feel lonely"* (Student 4). Another Chinese student gave a similar response:

It is very helpful to talk to them (my friends). Only talking is enough. If you have some problems and you cannot talk to anyone, you just think it by yourself, it is very horrible. If you talk to them, they can said, "Yeah, I can understand". Maybe both of you have the same problems. (Student 14)

Most student participants (15 out of 20) gave a highly positive evaluation of support from their friends and acknowledged that their friends' support really played an important role in the process of adaptation. An Indonesian participant (Student 7) said, *"And also I have a lot of friends here, I don't find anything difficult here, I am quite happy"*, and a Nepalese student gave an in-depth explanation on the benefits of the friends support:

Yes, they are quite helpful being communicate with people, being friendly with people. It makes you happy, makes your time pass easily, makes you fulfilling, and makes your heart and your mind feel happy. If you are happy in your heart and mind, you will be pretty happy, and you will look younger, and you will live longer. (Student 15)

However, support from friends also has its limitations. As the participants responded, most of their friends were international students as well and they were also a group of people who need to be supported. Thus, their friends would not provide more professional support in some aspects, such as academic support and psychological consulting. As an administrative staff member gave an example in the interview:

Like I know with some students if they suffering from depression and anxiety. Their friends know that is limited how much they can help, they are no try counselling. They are busy students as well. Therefore, the best way is talking

to us and then we can refer counsellors to provide professional support.
(Administrative staff 2)

5.3.6.3 Support from family

Because of its unique emotional attachment, family support was highly valued by the participants. Among the four sources of support, family is the only one which cannot help students to solve problems locally since it is normally far away from the host country. However, family support is irreplaceable and has its unique advantages. According participants' responses, they usually seek support from their family for some private problems. As a Chinese student (Student 3) said, *"There are some things you cannot talk to your friends, for example, something important or something private, you can talk to your parents"*. And also the family might be one of the best listeners for some international students to pour out their negative feelings because *"they can talk openly with their family about their worries"* (Administrative staff 2).

5.3.6.3.1 Emotional support

Family support was considered by the half of student participants (10 out of 20) as a main source of emotional support. Among them, 3 student participants mentioned that they had kept a high frequency of contact with their family by either telephone or the internet. It is very important to keep an emotional attachment with their family because frequent contact could effectively relieve these students' acculturative stress.

Encouragement and care were two important aspects of family emotional support mentioned by these participants. As a Chinese student (Student 13) said that, *"If I feel depressed, I will call my mum, and mum will encourage me and said you can do better or you can study very well. My mum is my motivation"*. Family was considered by these students as an emotional strength to strongly assist them to eliminate negative emotion. Apart from encouragement, care and concern was another important aspect showed by their family. Academic performance, health and security were high concerns in their family. The Chinese student (Student 20)

gave the response that *“My family always worried about me. They always ask me to study hard and to eat better, keep healthy, and don’t go out at night”*.

5.3.6.3.2 Financial support

According to participants’ responses, family was the major financial sponsor for most international students although there were other sources of financial support including scholarships, part-time jobs, and their own savings. As mentioned above, financial concerns caused by the lack of money directly influence international students’ standard of living as well as their psychological wellbeing. Those who have adequate financial support from their families would be at a low level of worries. The Chinese student’s response is an example (Student 13) said, *“No, I don’t have financial problems, because my parents support me, now I don’t need to worry about money, but I don’t know in the future”*.

5.3.6.3.3 Advisory support

In the interview, 5 student participants noted that their family usually gave advices and help them to solve various problems in Australia. According to their responses, the elders in family including their parents, grandparents, and those who have had similar overseas experiences usually provide advices. Advisory support has become one of the important aspects of family support. As the student (Student 9) said, *“They won’t know what happening in most of time, and when they find out after we tell them, they would give wises, give commends. Generally it’s quite helpful”*.

Regarding the evaluation of family support, 7 student participants gave a highly positive feedback on this support. An Arabic student (student 1) said, *“They give me a big support...The best support is from family. Family give you all the support, the biggest support”*, and a staff member (Administrative staff 1) also acknowledged that *“their family support them to make a huge effectiveness”*.

However, one student did not think that family could provide substantial support because they were far away from the host country. She also considered that frequently asking for support or speaking out negative feelings to their family would make the family worry. Therefore, she rarely seeks support from their family. It is

her response: *“You know they are too far away from here, so I meet some problems here, I don’t ask for help from them, because if I talk with them they become very worried. It’s not good”*. (Student 20)

An administrative staff raised another issue in regard to family support. Some students would have a negative evaluation of their family support because their family put too much pressure on them. These students’ parents have too high expectations and force their children to achieve goals. Such pressure would negatively impact these students’ psychological wellbeing. The following is the staff member’s response:

But also some things could be a cause, because some of the pressure put on the students by the family, the expectations they are going to be successful, earning money to be spent for them to come to Australia. So that sort of expectation also can be a trigger to some of these problems as well.
(Administrative staff 2)

5.3.6.4 Support from community

Compared with other sources of social support, support from the immediate community was given relatively less importance by the participants. About one third of student participants said that they rarely or never seek support from the local community. A Vietnamese student (Student 6) explained a reason that support from family, university, and friends basically satisfied her needs already so she did not need to seek support from the local community. However, an administrative staff participant (Administrative staff 2) considered that the underlying reason was cultural differences. As international students are more or less culturally different from the local community, it would be the greatest barrier to make close contacts with the community.

However, 8 participants in the interviews mentioned that church or any other local religious communities play an important role in providing support to international students in emotional and spiritual aspects as these religious communities tends to influence people spiritually by guiding them in a positive way to look at the world.

These supports can be greatly helpful for a range of conditions including loneliness, homesickness and depression. A Chinese student participant expressed his feelings about church in the interview,

You can meet different people there, you can talk to your friends because they are quite friendly, they can talk to the priest. Maybe they cannot solve the problems, maybe they cannot give some practical ideal or practical help, but at least there are somebody you can talk to, and they will give you some relief, and they will let you be positive about these things. At least that's good. (Student 3)

5.3.7 Theme 7: Suggestions and recommendations

Participants were all invited to give their suggestions and comments to the current and prospective international students and the university before completing the interview. These suggestions and recommendations were coded as a theme during the process of the data analyses.

Table 5.9. Theme 7: Suggestions and recommendations

Theme 7: Suggestions and recommendations	
Subtheme 1: Suggestions of and to the current and prospective international students	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills development ▪ Personalities development ▪ Having a secure and healthy life 	
Subtheme 2: Suggestions to the university	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regarding education as priority ▪ Improving services consciousness ▪ Providing proactive care 	

5.3.7.1 Subtheme 1: Suggestions of and to current and prospective international students

Most participants were willing to give their suggestions to current and prospective international students. They suggested that the experiences of studying abroad should be considered as a process of great experiential and academic learning, and thus international students should take great advantage of the opportunity to

cultivate personalities and acquire more skills. An academic staff member gave this advice in the interviews:

I think your study is not enough. There are so many things you can learn. You learn how to communicate with local people, learn how to adapt to the new culture, learn how to make friends, and you have to learn how to live alone as well. So don't just focus on your study alone, there are a lot of things you can learn and you should learn. And also I advise you if you have opportunity, you have to work ... because you can learn a lot from a workplace which is different from the academic environment. I also advise the students to travel a bit, to understand more about the history of this country, so they could understand the history in their own country. Having make your life better..., There are a lot of things they didn't know before, so again it is not just about study here, it's about making use of your opportunities. (Academic staff 1)

5.3.7.1.1 Acquiring skills

In terms of knowledge acquisition and skill development, English competency was considered as one of the most important abilities emphasized by 6 participants in the interviews. As discussed before, English language ability significantly related to not only international students' academic performance but their social contacts as well. Therefore, as suggested, improving English proficiency was vital for the current and prospective international students.

Another necessity was time management as the participants suggested. Due to the lack of time management skills, some students have difficulty in managing a huge workload or balancing their study and part-time work. Hence, 4 participants suggested that international students should learn how to appropriately manage their time.

Another thing for them to do is to be a good time manager, because a lot of students coming into UTAS tend to spend a lot of time, a quite number of

them tend to work to two, three, four o'clock in the morning. But sometimes I wonder whether this is effective. (Academic staff 2)

5.3.7.1.2 Personality development

Apart from the acquisition of skills, the participants also suggested international students to pay attention to developing their personalities during their sojourn here.

5.3.7.1.2.1 Be open

The first personal growth factor mentioned by 6 participants was “being open” in the interviews. International students were suggested to be open-minded, actively engaging in the local community rather than confining themselves within their own group. A Malaysian student participant gave the following response:

We prepare to expose yourself to the culture around, we prepare talk to people. If you come here, hang in up with your own group or your friend, you would learn absolutely nothing. ... If you come here, talk to people, get to know them, experience the culture, be ready to go out of your team to get to know people, otherwise it's a waste. It's not point to come to a foreign country and know nothing at all. (Student 8)

5.3.7.1.2.2 Be positive

It is unavoidable to meet with a range of difficulties when living in an unfamiliar foreign country. Having a positive attitude to look at difficulties and trying to find an effective solution is greatly advantageous for students in adapting to the unfamiliar environment. Wellbeing would also be boosted by a positive way of living and thinking. Thus, as two participants suggested, international students should take advantage of the experience to develop a more positive attitude.

5.3.7.1.2.3 Think before taking action

The participants also suggested international students to think carefully before taking action. Most International students are under 25 years old, and also they are far away from their family with little knowledge of the host country. These factors can become barriers in making a wise decision. Thus, as participants suggested,

taking careful consideration or making an enquiry from experienced people before taking action was a wise way to solve problems. A Korean student participant said,

I have money. I want to get a car, but I don't buy it. Because when I drive, maybe I will get accident, it could be problem. I don't want to any problem here. Just studying here and making Australian friends, and getting back.
(Student 17)

5.3.7.1.2.4 Good manners

One participant mentioned that international students should pay attention to their behaviour and try to behave with good manners. Cultivated behaviour is one of the important aspects of respect towards others. Education in a tertiary institution is not only an opportunity to receive an academic degree but also a process of self-improvement. Thus, international students were suggested to take advantage of the opportunity to motivate themselves towards a higher moral, cultural and intellectual level.

5.3.7.1.3 Having a secure and healthy life

Security and health as two salient points were emphasized by the participants in the interviews. They considered that these students were living in a foreign country far from their family with a demand on them to be more independent and more mature. Hence, they have to learn how to protect themselves, and also have to pay attention to their health and try to keep in a good healthy condition. As a Chinese student (Student 9) said, *in the life aspect, you have to know how to protect yourself since you are live overseas by yourself. Don't trust strangers.* An academic staff member also gave the similar response:

I think on the top of that, there is something completely separated, but it is hugely important is being healthy. I really think a lot of international students who have been here for years tend to work a lot of hours, but tend not to eat well, or exercise well and tend not be very healthy, or not to sleep enough, for example. So having good health would be a huge thing people have to try to work at when coming into a different environment like UTAS.
(Academic staff 2)

5.3.7.2 Subtheme 2: Suggestions to the university

5.3.7.2.1 Regarding education as priority

The participants suggested that a university should put education as their first consideration as the ultimate purpose of a university is educating and cultivating people to become a professional by systematic relevant training. As one administrative staff (Administrative staff 2) said, *“Students here to get a good education as the priority and everything else is a bonus after that”*.

5.3.7.2.2 Improving service consciousness

Besides, the participants provided some suggestions to the university in terms of students' services. It was suggested that services for students should focus on the attitude that the clients (that is, the students) should be central and the university should establish a good environment to satisfy their needs. An academic staff interviewed gave the following example,

My suggestion to the university is make sure: people have got space to work. As postgraduate students in UTAS, if you are a PhD student, you may get your space, but if you are master students, you don't get space. Master students quite often go on to become to PhD students here or somewhere else. Presuming somebody who comes is already a PhD student as well, we should treat postgraduate students with a little bit more respect, and give them the respect of having a working space where they can actually do their work undisturbed rather than having to quite often go back to their very difficult situation, for example to accommodation away from the university.
(Academic staff 2)

5.3.7.2.3 Providing a proactive care

The two administrative staff both considered that the services provided to international students needed to be improved and they should provide more information before these students leaving their home country so that they could make a better preparation. *“Orientation should contain more information. I am not sure how many information we provide for student to prepare before they come*

here, but we should provide as much information as possible to let students prepare” (Administrative staff 1).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter focused on a qualitative data analysis. With a thematic data analysis method, a total of 7 themes and 22 subthemes inductively emerged from the data. This thematic structure gave a descriptive framework of international students’ entire transition process from making preparation before departure, transiting to a new environment, to taking various coping strategies to adapt to the new environment. These students’ psychological responses to the unfamiliar environment were also inducted as an important theme in the thematic hierarchy. Additionally, suggestions to the current and prospective international students and educational institution were also given at the end of the chapter. Qualitative data providing more detailed information can be considered as an indispensable explanation and as complementary to the quantitative data. Therefore, more profound discussion in combination of quantitative and qualitative findings will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The last two chapters detailed the quantitative and qualitative data analysis processes. Findings including frequencies and percentages of the participants' responses, the relationship with the participants' demographic characteristics, and the correlations between adjustment issues and the participants' psychological wellbeing were obtained from the quantitative data analysis. In the qualitative data analysis, 7 themes emerged from the set of data by means of the thematic analysis, including *preparation and expectation, transition to a new environment, social contact, psychological wellbeing, coping strategies, social support, and suggestions and recommendations*. As the research design, both quantitative and qualitative data are integrated during the interpretation and discussion phase. In this chapter, in the light of the literature reviewed, the results drawn from both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis are discussed together to provide a complete and comprehensive account for the international students' health and wellbeing at UTAS. The findings are presented in the following five sections in the order of the research objectives.

6.2 Research objective 1: Adjustment issues

The first research objective of this study is to identify the adjustment issues that are related to international students' health and wellbeing in the Tasmanian tertiary education context. In order to achieve this objective, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analysed to explore and seek explanation to this question in an in-depth manner. Five issues, including academic problems, basic living conditions, financial worries, social contact and racial discrimination, emerged as crucial in understanding the significant aspects of the international students' health and wellbeing in the Tasmanian tertiary context.

6.2.1. Academic issues

Successful accomplishment of the study is one of the main purposes of studying abroad and thus an excellent academic performance is highly valued by most international students (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2007, 2008). Academic-related issues are of a major concern to international students (Hashim & Zhiliang, 2003; Misra, et al., 2003). In this study, the participants' satisfaction with their academic performance was significantly associated with their level of depression. The finding is supported by the literature that international students' academic performance influences these students' psychological wellbeing (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993a; Yang & Clum, 1994; Yeh & Inose, 2003). The four salient academic barriers to be discussed in this section are *language barrier*, *unfamiliarity with the Australian tertiary education system*, *intense workload* and *peer pressure*. Apart from these barriers, international students, in fact, obtain many *academic benefits* from studying abroad. This issue is addressed in the last part of this section.

6.2.1.1 Language barriers

Language barrier as the most salient problem has been encountered by most international students, especially those who come from a non-English speaking background (NESB) (Arthur, 2004; Liu, 2001; Mori, 2000). Inadequate English language proficiency greatly obstructs international students' academic progress (Khawaja & Dempsey, 2007; Mori, 2000). Three problems relating to language barriers are identified in this study: academic writing, accent and varieties of English.

6.2.1.1.1. Academic writing

Academic writing is considered one of the biggest challenges for international students (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004). It was challenging when some international students learn and adapt to the various writing genres in English, including academic essays, scientific reports, reflections and even emails. They have difficulties in selecting the appropriate words according to the actual linguistic context. While their lack of English language proficiency is one of the causes, a more important reason is that many students' prior English learning focused on English

grammar rather than learning English for practical communication (Kell & Vogl, 2007; Sawir, 2005). The pedagogical style in some NESB countries is the memorisation of English grammatical rules didactically and passively. Therefore, students from these countries would have greater difficulties in using English for practical purposes, especially when they are studying in an English-speaking country and need to communicate in practical English.

In addition, some students have difficulties in presenting their arguments solidly and structurally in their essays. A major reason is that their understanding of the rhetoric in the original culture is different from what is being conveyed in western cultures (Yue, 2009). Hence, those international students who were not trained in the non-Anglo-Western styles in their previous education may need to develop the style of rhetoric to meet the learning requirements in Australian tertiary education institutions (Spizzica, 1997). Consequently, NESB students require a large amount of time to acquire not only English skills but also knowledge about the hosting culture.

6.2.1.1.2. Australian accent

Another type of language barrier for international students is the Australian accent which greatly hinders international students' communication in class and integration into the local academic context (Karim, 2010; Kell & Vogl, 2007).

Australian English has a distinctive accent which is characterised by high-pitched, nasal, drawling or lazy sounds. It easily brings problems to international students, especially those whose previous English teachers in their countries of origin have other English accents, such as an American accent or a British accent (Kell & Vogl, 2007), and those who have few experiences in interacting with local Australian people (Karim, 2010). The fact that Australia is a multi-cultural country adds more complexity. Many lecturers in universities are not from Australia and speak English with different accents. Therefore, international students studying in Australia have to adapt to not only Australian but also a variety of different international accents.

6.2.1.1.3. *Varieties of English*

The study found that the third language barrier international students studying in Australia encounter was the varieties in English language. Australian English is different from other main national standard varieties, such as British English, American English and other second-language varieties such as Singaporean English and Malaysian English. The differences concentrate on the usages in phonology, morphology, and syntax (Kortmann & Schneider, 2004). Thus, if the students' previous English learning focused on only one variety other than Australian English, they would have difficulties in adapting to Australian English in both spoken and written expressions.

6.2.1.2 **Unfamiliarity with the Australian tertiary educational style**

International students, especially who have educational experiences that are greatly different from the Australian learning and teaching styles, would have difficulties in adapting to the Australian educational environment. Unfamiliarity with the Australian tertiary educational style not only negatively affects international students' academic adjustments but also greatly obstructs their psychological adaption (Arthur, 2004). Results of the quantitative analysis in this study supported literature as it is found that the participants' familiarity with the Australian educational style was significantly related to their level of depression. The qualitative results in this study complemented the quantitative results by addressing three main problems caused by unfamiliarity of the Australian tertiary educational style: *student-centred teaching and independent learning, emphasis on learning process, and differences in assignment requirements*.

6.2.1.2.1. *Student-centred teaching and independent learning*

Many international students, especially students of an Asian background, have difficulties in fitting into the new education environment which is characterised by a student-centred teaching and independent learning style (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Wong, 2004). The root cause was explained as that a large number of Asian students have already been familiar and accustomed to a didactic and teacher-centred teaching method (Kennedy, 2002), which is characterised by a passive and

dependent learning approach (Mori, 2000; Wong, 2004) when they were studying in their home country. It is hence challenging for these students to adjust to the new knowledge acquisition method that requires them to explore actively and independently.

6.2.1.2.2. Emphasis on learning process

Compared to the examination-orientated education system in some countries, especially in Asian countries (Kennedy, 2002; Lee, 1996), the Australian education structure puts more emphasis on the learning process rather than the results. In Australia, examination is not the only means to assess students' academic performance. Other assessment strategies, including assignments, presentations, group discussions, and reflection, are also utilised in Australian schools and universities. Thus, international students who are used to the examination-oriented style may find it demanding that they have to cope with assessment activities throughout the semester instead of only focussing on examinations for a relatively shorter time span.

6.2.1.2.3. Differences in assignment requirements

Differences in assignment requirements were mentioned by the student participants in interviews in this study. These students encountered difficulties in meeting assignment requirements as they were given different expectations in their previous education experiences. Referencing was raised most often due to the culturally different views in plagiarism between Anglo-Western countries and some other regions, such as Asia and Middle East. Anglo-Western countries, including Australia, hold a view that ownership of ideas or texts should be highly respected and valued and therefore copying from another source constitutes stealing or plagiarism. In contrast, in Asian and Middle Eastern cultures, copying short phrases or sentences from books or other sources is not considered as cheating but a way of showing one's respect for the received wisdom of their ancestors or a community or family value (Buranen, 1999). The researcher of this study is from a Chinese culture. Chinese intellectuals would incorporate terms and phrases of others in their own work to show their knowledge in literature and it is not customary to mark

these terms or phrases by quotation marks and to quote the sources. There is an implicit consensus that knowledgeable readers should know where these terms and phrases come from. Thus, being influenced by these cultures, copying from others' work is not discouraged in these regions. Such different perspectives in copying cause great difficulties for international students, especially those from Asian and Middle Eastern countries, in appropriately referencing other sources and avoiding plagiarism when they come to study in Australia. In addition, different disciplines use referencing styles differently, which pose another difficulty for the international students who are unfamiliar with the required referencing styles.

6.2.1.3 Intense workload

The study found that workload was highly rated as one of the most important factors impacting international students' adaptation to the Australian academic context. Some participants indicated that heavy workload and pressing due dates would cause severe stresses. Workload consists of three components: scheduled class contacts hours, time required to understand course contents and time to complete assignments. The former component is easy to identify, but the latter two would vary considerably from student to student (Chamber, 1992). The pressure that heavy workload brings would be more severe for international students because of their inadequate command of English and unfamiliarity with the Australian education style.

The first reason that has caused international students' perceptions of heavy workload is their inadequate English ability. Due to a lower English language ability, some international students will have to spend more time on academic reading and writing, proofreading, preparation for oral presentations and examinations (Fan & Yue, 2009). This is supported by Kember and Leungh's (1998) view that students who have a lower English ability perceive a higher workload.

Another reason why international students have higher responses to intense workload is because their unfamiliarity with the Australian educational style. The study found that some student participants could not adapt to the independent learning style because they were accustomed to obtaining answers directly from

their teachers rather than exploring the answers by themselves independently (Kennedy, 2002; Mori, 2000). This would result in longer time spent on exploring and organising the knowledge obtained from different sources. Moreover, learning and adapting to the distinctive writing requirements such as referencing and essay structures may also take more time (Yue, 2009). All these issues mentioned above would result in a heavy workload and also negatively influence these students' wellbeing.

6.2.1.4 Pressure

Student participants in the interviews mentioned that local Australian students' advantages in English language, familiarity with academic environment and good academic performance create a great pressure on them because compared to Australian students, they are more disadvantaged in achieving their academic goals. These disadvantages include inadequate English ability (Arthur, 2004; Mori, 2000), unfamiliarity with the Australian teaching and learning style (Arthur, 2004), influences of their prior educational experiences and cultures (e.g. Chan, 1999; Cortazzi & Jin, 1997; Ho, 2001), and exclusiveness from the local academic context (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). All these unfavourable factors cause great pressure and obstacles for international students in adapting to the new academic environment and achieving better academic performance, especially in situations when they are compared to or need to compete with local students. In addition, other international students' higher English ability or better academic performance would also place pressure on those who are not confident in their own language ability. Such pressure is adverse to their psychological wellbeing.

6.2.1.5 Academic benefits

All the issues discussed above are negative aspects related to international students' wellbeing. However, studying abroad does bring great benefits to these students (Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004), which all enhance their psychological and social wellbeing. Three most important benefits mentioned by the participants in this study are: *academic achievement, acquisition of abilities and skills, establishment of networking*.

Getting an academic degree or diploma is considered as the most obvious academic achievement for most international students because successfully obtaining a university degree or a tertiary certificate would be considered as a strong demonstration of one's good study ability as well as mastery of knowledge in a particular field. This can ignite one's interest in a career direction and essentially influence his/her future career development (Dwyer & Peters, 2004).

In addition, some important abilities and skills are developed from studying abroad. The most obvious one is English communication skills. English and sociolinguistic competency can be well improved while studying in an English speaking country for most international students (McGrath & Burtcher, 2004; Pellegrino, 1998). Apart from language ability, other abilities and skills including critical and analytical thinking ability, communication skills, academic writing skills and computer skills could be improved as well. Furthermore, studying abroad may help build a cultural awareness, an understanding of cultural differences and cross-cultural skills (Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004).

In addition, studying in a university is a valuable opportunity to establish and expand a student's social network. Networking with academics or experts in certain an academic field or establishing friendship with other students would be beneficial to students' future development.

All the positive factors and the achievements discussed above would play a greatly positive role in the future life of the students who choose to study abroad. The findings that emerged from this study challenged the most previous literature that tended to be put more emphasis on negative aspects of international students' sojourn experiences, such as their low English proficiency, culture shocks, negative emotions, etc. In fact, studying aboard is a learning and growth process which influences international students in a positive way through academic learning and cross-cultural interaction.

6.2.2 Basic living conditions

The result of quantitative data analysis in this study showed that participants' satisfaction with their living conditions (e.g. accommodation, food, and transport) of the host country was significantly associated with their psychological wellbeing. The qualitative data analysis gave an in-depth explanation to complement the statistic result.

6.2.2.1 Accommodation

Generally, the participants had a high level of satisfaction with their accommodation in Tasmania as more than half of them expressed they were very or extremely satisfied with their accommodation. The study also found that the participants who were more satisfied with their accommodation had a lower level of depression. This finding is partially supported by Rosenthal, Russell, and Thomson's (2006) study which argues that students' satisfaction on the accommodation is associated with both the level of depression and the level of anxiety. However, the later association is not found in this study.

6.2.2.1.1. Types of accommodation

The quantitative data in this study showed that nearly 90% of the participants lived in shared houses, while a small percentage lived in hostels (7%), homestays (7%), their own houses or family's or relative's houses (2%). This is different from Ward and Masgorets' (2004) study which finds that most international students in New Zealand live in shared houses (43%) and homestays (42%). The statistics in this study also indicated that the participants' satisfaction with their accommodation was not significantly differentiated by the type of accommodation they are living. This finding is markedly different from two studies conducted in New Zealand (Ward & Masgoret, 2004) and in Melbourne (Rosenthal, et al., 2006) as both found significant associations between international students' satisfaction with their accommodation and the type of accommodation they are living.

6.2.2.1.2. *Economic considerations*

The high popularity of shared houses in Tasmania is attributable to the low rents. According to UTAS (2011a), homestay accommodation in Hobart and Launceston cost an average of A\$210 per week per student plus an administrative fee of A\$175; and university hostels (including off-campus and on-campus) are approximately A\$228 per week per student. In contrast, rent for a room in shared house is on average approximately A\$130 per week which is cheaper than the first two options. Accommodation costs are shown in Figure 6.1.

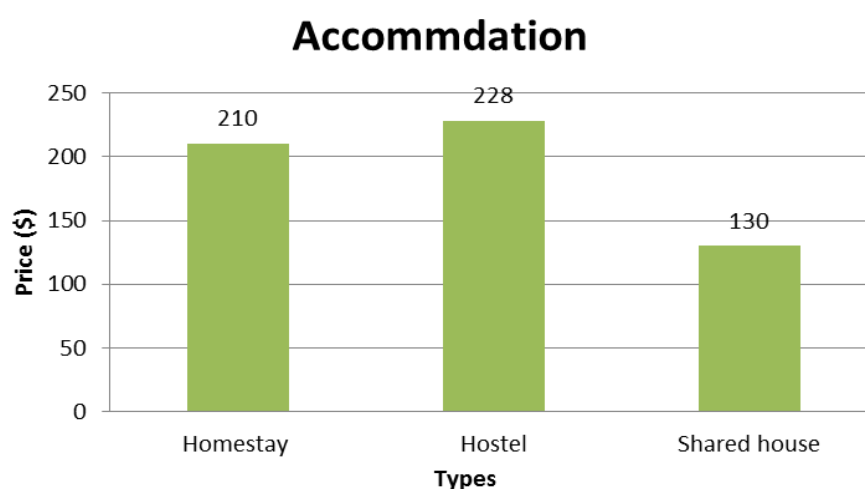


Figure 6.1. Prices of accommodation

Figure 6.1 shows that shared houses offer the lowest price amongst the three types of accommodation. Although homestay and hostel accommodation have their own advantages, such as better security and a multicultural environment (as there are more opportunities to contact locals and other international students), the higher prices have resulted in fewer resident international students. Therefore, it can be concluded that economic considerations determine the accommodation selection of most international students. This finding is supported by Khawaja and Dempsey's (2007) study which identifies that unaffordable rentals definitely bring great pressure financially and psychologically to international students.

6.2.2.1.3. *Other important factors*

Apart from prices, location of accommodation and relationship with the landlords and other housemates are other two important factors identified in this study

which are related to international students' satisfaction with their living place. In terms of location, most international students prefer to live close to the university campus. Security is the first consideration. Long walking distance between home and the campus could predispose students to being victims of crime and other potential dangers especially at night. Living close to the campus can also save time and cost of travelling. In addition, proximity to the campus renders easy access to campus facilities, such as libraries, amenities, transport, security, and community, which also greatly affect students' evaluation of the accommodation.

Relationship with their landlords and other tenants is another important factor affecting international students' level of satisfaction. Relationship with homestay families was emphasised in Ward and Masgoret's (2004) study. This study also finds a correlation between students' satisfaction and their relationship with the landlords and other tenants. According to the participants' responses, most of them get along harmoniously with their landlords and housemates. Those who enjoy a good relationship tend to indicate fewer negative emotional issues such as depression and loneliness.

6.2.2.2 Diet and other health behaviours

Food is one of the most basic elements in maintaining a person's physical and psychological health (Bidlack, 1996; Capra, 2007). When relocating to a foreign country, being unaccustomed to the local food would be a challenge encountered by most sojourners, including international students. Most international students would change their original dietary habits consciously or unconsciously because of unavailability of ethnic food or ingredients, the different concepts of nutrition, or different ways of processing food in the new country. In this study, three dietary issues are identified: unavailability of ethnic food, lack of tradition family support and low substance dependency.

6.2.2.2.1. Unavailability of ethnic food

The unavailability of ethnic food was emphasised by the participants. As it is shown in the quantitative data, about half of the students were not satisfied with the types

of food available in Tasmania. The regional location is the main reason for the unavailability of ethnic food in Tasmania. Some Asian students were dissatisfied when comparing food suppliers with those in other urban areas in Australia. Besides, students from Arabic and Muslim countries also had high level of dissatisfaction with the availability of “halal” food in Tasmania because they had to maintain their traditional dietary habits for cultural and religious reasons. Apart from unavailability, high prices and low quality of ethnic food also cause their dissatisfaction with food availability in Tasmania. These findings are consistent with a study conducted in the United States (Pan, Dixon, Himburg, & Huffman, 1999) which claims that unavailability of ethnic food is one of salient problems encountered by Asian students in America.

6.2.2.2.2. Lack of traditional family support

Furthermore, due to the lack of traditional family support, international students have to solve food and diet problems independently. This study found that most international students cook for themselves at home and seldom go out for a dinner. Economic and health considerations are two dominant factors. Home-cooking can be more economical than going out for a meal and also home-cooked meals are often healthier than meals bought from restaurants especially “fast food” sources. Therefore, over 80% of the participants reported a low frequency of eating “fast food” and 10% of the participants had never eaten “fast food” in Tasmania. However, the lack of traditional family support in dietary aspect may result in a decrease in international students’ healthy dietary habits (Ramakrishna & Weiss, 1992). For example, the study found that approximately 11% of the participants rarely or never eat fruit, and 7% participants rarely or never eat vegetables. Also, 36% participants often or very often skip their breakfasts.

6.2.2.2.3. Low substance dependency

Other unhealthy behaviours, including smoking and alcohol drinking, are also investigated in this study. The study found that over 80% participants have never or rarely smoked or consumed alcohol. The findings are supported by a study conducted in Melbourne which argued that international students have low rate of

smoking and alcohol drinking (Rosenthal, et al., 2006). However, the study has found a higher percentage of drinking alcohol in Tasmanian international students (6.2%) than international students in Melbourne (1%).

6.2.2.3 Transportations

Apart from the accommodation and food factors, transportation is another important factor that influences international students' quality of life in an unfamiliar environment. As quantitative results indicated, more than half of the participants were satisfied with the public transport in Tasmania, while about one fifth of participants were not very satisfied. Also, those who have a car (or bike) have a higher level of satisfaction in the area of transport than those who do not have their own transport. In agreement with literature (Benjamin, 2009; Dora & Phillips, 2000; Farhang & Bhatia, 2005), service, safety, and prices are the three key factors that determine international students' level of satisfaction with public transports.

6.2.2.3.1. Services

Although the international students were moderately satisfied with public transport services in Tasmania, some problems such as low frequencies, inadequate numbers of bus stops and transport choices were still of high concern to these participants. These problems may not be considered as serious problems by local residents who rely less on public transports. However, they would become salient for international students who are highly dependent on public transport due to lower private car ownership. Such inconveniences caused by public transport may easily incur a negative evaluation of Tasmanian transport services by international students.

6.2.2.3.2. Security and prices

Transport security, including safety on buses or at bus stop zones, is of great concern to some international students, especially those who need to take buses late at night or in the early morning. Additionally, prices are another factor considered by this student group. Most international students were satisfied with

bus ticket prices in Tasmania, but they considered that taxi prices were unaffordable. Thus, they preferred to choose other transports rather than taxis.

6.2.3 Financial concerns

Financial concerns are usually considered as one of the greatest sources of stress for international students (Chen, 1999; Mori, 2000; Mullins, et al., 1995b).

Quantitative data of this study indicated that the majority of international students (90%) had different degrees of financial concerns. Among these students, one quarter was very or extremely worried about their finances. The study also revealed that financial worries have a statistically significant association with the participants' levels of homesickness, loneliness, and depression. This finding is supported by Rosenthal, Russell and Thomson's (2006) study which indicates that an enormous financial pressure must exert a greatly negative influence on their psychological wellbeing. Rapid growth of tuition fee, limited scholarships options, and increasing living costs are three salient factors that incur financial burdens to international students and their families.

6.2.3.1 Growth of tuition fee and lack of scholarship

One of the main reasons that causes international students' financial concerns is increasing tuition fees (Chen, 1999). Chen (2002) argues that under Australian government policy education should be treated as the same as other service industries in which the 'user-pays' principles apply, and therefore universities must gain income by their own effort. Thus, tuition fees from international students have become an important financial source for most universities in Australia.

International students are required a much higher fee than that charged to Australian domestic students. Also, Australian government grants student visas only to those who are able to meet financial requirements of full study and living costs in Australia (IMMI, 2011a). Apart from the higher tuition fees, international students have fewer opportunities to get loans, scholarships or other financial support compared to Australian students. The finding is supported by Lin and Yi's (1997) study which notes that scholarship options offered by the university to international students are far less than those for local students.

6.2.3.2 Increase of living cost

Another financial burden addressed in this study is the increasing living costs in Tasmania. Although the cost of living in Tasmania is cheaper than the other states in Australia, it has had a rapid increase during 2008 to 2011. According to the university estimated statistics (UTAS, 2011b), international student need to prepare a living cost of A\$12,000 to A\$14,500 a year for accommodation, transport, book, food, electricity, entertainment in 2011. The amount has increased dramatically compared to the amount A\$8,000 to A\$11,000 required in 2009. The growth in tuition fees and living expenses has brought international students under greater psychological pressure and increased their negative emotions.

6.2.3.3 Unexpected events

According to the participants' responses, unexpected events would also cause financial crises. When encountering some particular circumstances, such as examination failure, visa extension, physical diseases, psychological problems, or accident, most international students would become anxious because they need to spend money unexpectedly or beyond their budget. Levels of anxiety would rise due to the lack of perceived control over these particular events (Rapee, Craske, Brown, & Barlow, 1996). Furthermore, some international students were not willing to inform their family or friends about some incidents, such as examination failure or psychological problems. Such circumstances would easily result in an increase in anxiety for international students.

6.2.3.4 Lack of job opportunities

Casual or part-time jobs would help reduce international students' financial burdens to some extent. In Australia, international students are eligible to work 20 hours per week during semester times (IMMI, 2011a). Thus, most international students would like to seek a casual or part-time job to get some income. However, more than half of the participants in this study were not very satisfied with the job opportunities in Tasmania due to the regional location of Tasmania and the limited work opportunities compared to mainland Australia.

Limited work opportunities resulted in the high dependence of international students on their family support. This dependence did not only bring great financial burden to their family but also caused negative emotions in the international students. At the tertiary education level, these international students tend to be more independent, while high financial dependence would negatively influence their sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

On the other hand, those who had found a part-time job still had problems in balancing time between their work and study or other daily activities. Part-time or casual jobs may take much of their leisure time. In order to gain some income, these students have to give up their rest time, exercise time, social time, and/or even study time to undertake a job. Although these job opportunities help reduce their financial burdens, spending much time to work may cause an unhealthy life style and negatively affect their physical health and psychological wellbeing.

6.2.4 Social contact

The extent of social contact with the local society is related to international students' socio-cultural and psychological wellbeing (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Rosenthal, et al., 2006). According to the quantitative results, the limited opportunities of contacting with the local society were significantly associated with the international students' negative psychological emotions, such as homesickness, loneliness, anxiety and depression. It is also found that those participants who had more friends in the local communities had a lower level of negative emotions. These findings support the literature which mention that international students who have more social contacts are more satisfied with their sojourn experiences (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Selltiz, 1963).

It appears in the qualitative data that there were barriers that had obstructed international students' interaction with the local community. As it is indicated in previous studies (Rosenthal, et al., 2006; Ward, et al., 2001), most international students prefer to stay within in their own ethnic groups rather than having broad contacts with the local society. Similarly, nearly 40% of the participants in this study

considered that it was not easy to make friends with local people, while another 40% participants thought the opportunities of participating in local activities were limited. Barriers that have obstructed international students' contact with local society were identified as cultural differences, inadequate language competency, intercultural misunderstandings, religious differences and physiological factors.

6.2.4.1. Cultural differences

Cultural differences as one of the greatest barriers have been widely discussed in literature. Hall's (1976, 1990, 1998, 2000) "high versus low-context culture" theory and Hofstede's (1980, 1986, 1991, 2007; 2005) "cultural difference dimensions" are considered as two important theories in cultural comparisons and categorisations. These two theories have provided an explicit theoretical guidance to the subsequent studies and suggested that cultural differences would create great barriers in intercultural communications. As Furnham and Bochner (1982) argue, the greater differences there are between the home culture and the host culture, the more cultural difficulties international students would experience. In this study, most international students are from Asia. Asian cultures are commonly considered as having great cultural differences to the Australian culture. Hence, cultural differences were considered to be the major problem which is obstructive to the international students' social contacts with the local society.

6.2.4.2. Inadequate Language competency

International students' inadequate language competency is another salient barrier to limit their social contacts with the local community (Arthur, 2004). The study found that those students who had a higher English competency could make friend with local people more easily and had more opportunities to participate in local activities. In other words, these students had a higher degree of socio-cultural adaptation. Language competency is a broad concept which not only includes adequate grammatical knowledge but also involves social linguistic competence and adequate knowledge of the host culture (Arthur, 2004; Redmond & Bunyi, 1993a). A language is firmly embedded in its social context and it cannot be fully understood without an understanding of its social and cultural context (Jenkins, 1992). Some

international students meet communication barriers because of their deficit knowledge of culture, social norms and conventions of the host country (Kell & Vogl, 2007; McGrath & Burtcher, 2004).

6.2.4.3. Intercultural misunderstandings

Inadequate intercultural communication may result in misunderstandings between sojourners and local people. Misunderstandings are considered as a interactional stance rather than a unidirectional phenomenon existing independently of participants' claims (Hinnenkamp, 1999). As Kell and Vogl's (2007) argue, many Australian locals have little knowledge of international students' countries of origin and their cultures. Some of them have a sketchy or biased image or view about these countries from media and thereby hold a negative or even malicious attitude to international students and their cultures. Some international students, vice versa, feel racially discriminated or have a misunderstanding that local people are not friendly. Such mutual misunderstandings caused by inadequate intercultural communication obstruct intercultural contacts and therefore become unfavourable to both students' social adaptation and psychological wellbeing.

6.2.4.4. Religious differences

Religious differences are another factor which influences international students' social contacts with the local society. Some international students' religious beliefs and values would restrict their behaviours because some values in the host country are in violation of their religious faith. These students would consciously keep a distance from the local community in order to maintain their religious traditions (Kell & Vogl, 2007).

6.2.4.5. Psychological factors

As it was shown in the participants' responses, barriers in intercultural contacts may cause negative psychological emotions, such as fear, ashamedness, embarrassment, and discomfort, which would raise a consciousness of rejection in contacting with the local community. As grown-ups, some international students tended to be embarrassed by the mistakes made in the communication process caused by

inadequate English language competency and a lack of knowledge of local culture. The finding is supported by a psychological argument that mature people are more inclined to feel embarrassed than younger people in face of mistakes or faults (Lewis, Stanger, Sullivan, & Barone, 1991). Thus, some international students consider it is “safer” to stay with their own ethnic groups. Such kinds of thoughts would psychologically obstruct their contacts with and adaptation into the host social environment.

6.2.5. Racial discrimination

Racial discrimination is a sensitive however unavoidable issue that has been commonly discussed in intercultural contexts. Most sojourners experience varied degrees of racial discriminations because of their shift from being members of the majority race to the minority one (Arthur, 2004). One third of the participants in this study considered that there was racism existing in Tasmania and most of these students had experienced racial discriminations in varying degrees. Also, about 20% of the participants had a high level of safety concern. The number is much higher than a study undertaken in Melbourne which finds only 2% students are highly concerned about safety (Rosenthal, et al., 2006).

The higher level of safety concern in Tasmania may be due to the regional location of Tasmania within which ethnic minorities are more likely to experience overt racism than those in areas of higher density (Maynard & Read, 1997). Skin colour is the most obvious physical attribute to racism. This is supported by Neal’s (2002) study which finds that discriminations are more frequently experienced in rural areas by those who are classed as being “not white”. Besides, the student participants in this study responded that most discrimination they encountered was in the form of verbal abuse and from the younger generation, which is consistent with the Ray and Reed’s (2005) findings. In addition, Ray and Reed (2005) note that racial discrimination should be discussed in a specific context. This study took the university campus into consideration and found that there was less racial discrimination happening on-campus than off-campus (McGrath & Burtcher, 2004).

6.2.5.1. Negative effect of racial discrimination

Racial discrimination experiences exert a severe negative effect on sojourners' psychological wellbeing (Baumeister & Tice, 1990; Frable, 1993; Williams & Hunt, 1997). Findings in this study basically support the previous studies as the quantitative results indicated that discrimination experiences were positively correlated with international students' level of anxiety, loneliness, and depression. These negative emotions tended to cause their negative or even hostile attitudes to the host country and the local community and thereby negatively influence their adaptation to the host socio-cultural environment.

6.2.5.2. Coping with racial discrimination

Most international students prefer forbearance rather than confrontation in coping with racial discrimination because they are the ethnical minority in the host country and commonly perceived as less powerful when facing racial discrimination. This perceived powerlessness would affect the decision in coping with racial discrimination (Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999). Also, according to the participants' responses, the lack of social resources for negotiation and the fear of causing further trouble were another two reasons to determine their preference of passive coping. Furthermore, discrimination was mostly in a covert form, which was another factor that hindered them from directly confronting the people who performed the discriminatory behaviour.

The study also proposed a view that international students' perception of racial discrimination was also related to their responses to discrimination. Some students were more sensitive to their own distinctive racial features and would be consciously reminded by themselves of differences from the majority race. Such sensitivity in race differences could easily cause their inner pressure and resulted in a biased judgement to the majority race. These students therefore would report more responses of or have more negative feelings about racial discrimination than the others who were not sensitive to their racial features.

6.3 Research objective 2: Demographic factors in perceptions of adjustment issues

The last section has discussed a number of adjustment issues that were raised during international students' geographic and socio-cultural transitions. Such issues were considered as main factors that were significantly related to their acculturative stress. This section involves participants' demographic variables, including gender, age, length of stay in Tasmania, and English proficiency and discusses the influential effects of these factors on international students' health and wellbeing.

6.3.1. Gender

There are limited studies in examining the relationships between gender and sojourners' adjustments, although there is a general view that females may feel more difficulty than males in adjusting to an unfamiliar environment (Carballo, 1994). The study found male participants had a higher level of satisfaction with their accommodations and English abilities than females. From the diet perspective, the consumption of fruits and vegetables by male students was significantly less than female students. It was also more frequent for male students to skip breakfasts than the females. It could be concluded that female students were more positive in perceptions of dietary balance than male students, which is supported by a number of existing studies (Johansson, Thelle, Solvoll, Bjorneboe, & Drevon, 1999; Roos, Lahelma, Virtanen, Prattala, & Pietinen, 1998; Wardle et al., 2004). However, the finding is inconsistent with a study conducted in America, which suggests that female students eat breakfasts less regularly than male student (Pan, et al., 1999). Regarding other health behaviours, this study discovered that the male participants had higher frequencies of smoking and drinking alcohol than the female participants. These finding is consistent with previous study (Rosenthal, et al., 2006).

6.3.2. Age

The age of students was also found to influence various factors associated with international students' health and wellbeing. The study discovered that the younger participants felt far less safe than the more mature participants in this unfamiliar cultural context. From the academic aspect, the more mature participants were more satisfied with their academic performance than the younger group. This finding is consistent with some previous studies (e.g., Church, 1982; Hore, 1992). Besides, more mature students were more satisfied with the information provided by the university to international students than the younger participants. However, it should be noted that the younger participant group felt more involved in classes than the mature participants. This is consistent with the finding of Church's (1982) study which indicates that younger students are more easily integrated into new academic settings. Additionally, the more mature participants in this study responded higher consumption of fruits and vegetables than the younger international students. It can be interpreted that the mature students have more positive health perceptions than the younger group (Johansson, et al., 1999).

6.3.3. Length of stay

The findings of the study showed that international students' length of stay in the host country was an important factor which was significantly related to their adjustment both in socio-cultural and psychological aspects. However, some previous studies (Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999) argue that international students' length of stay in a host country is related to their socio-cultural adjustment but there is no relationship with their psychological adjustment.

As quantitative results indicated, those international students who had been Tasmania for a longer time were more satisfied with the public transport system and job opportunities in Tasmania. Also, this student group had more opportunities to participate in local community activities. This findings support the arguments in literature (Rosenthal, et al., 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999) that international students' lengths of stay are positively related to their sociocultural adaption. On the other hand, this study showed that the participants'

psychological wellbeing was also significantly related to their lengths of stay in Tasmania. Participants who had been in Tasmania for less than 12 month responded the most homesickness and depression. Also, those who had stayed in Tasmania for a longer period had higher responses to racism and discrimination experiences. Ward and Masgoret's study (2004) has a similar finding that international students who have a longer length of stay in New Zealand have more experiences of racism discrimination.

In terms of dietary habits, although the frequencies of eating "fast food" were low in general, there was a positively statistical association between the international students' lengths of stay and the frequencies of eating "fast food". The longer they had been Tasmania, the more often they would take "fast food". Also, students who had stayed longer in Tasmania had relatively higher frequencies of skipping breakfasts. These two findings are supported by Pan, et al's (1999) study which suggests that Asian students' frequencies of eating "fast food" and skipping breakfast increase with their lengths of living in America.

6.3.4. English Level

International students' English proficiency is not only related to their academic adjustment but also associated with their socio-cultural adaption (Kell & Vogl, 2007; Khawaja & Dempsey, 2007; Mori, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003). From the aspect of academic adjustment, this study discovered that those students who had higher English proficiencies were more satisfied with their academic performance and more familiar with the Australian educational system. Also, they tended to have a higher level of satisfaction with the academic staff and administrative staff at the university. All these findings indicated that English proficiency was conducive to international students' adjustment to the unfamiliar academic environment.

In terms of socio-cultural adaptations, English proficiency also plays an important role in supporting international students in integrating into the local culture and society (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993a). The quantitative results in this study agree with the above statement by the evidence that the participants who had a higher English

level were more familiar with the Australian accent, find it easier to make friends with local people and had more opportunities to participate in local community activities.

Apart from the aspects of academic adjustment and socio-cultural adaptation, adequate English proficiency is positively associated with international students' psychological wellbeing (Kell & Vogl, 2007). The findings of this study indicated that the participants who had a higher English level had a greater sense of safety and a lower level of depression. In terms of health behaviours, this participant group held a more positive attitude to doing physical exercise.

6.4 Research objective 3: Coping strategies

Besides adjustment issues and the relationships with demographic factors, this study has also examined coping strategies used by these international students and the ways in which these students released their acculturative stress. Based on the participants' responses and the literature reviewed, two categories of coping strategies "change" and "adjustment" were identified in this study.

6.4.1. Change

Strategies within the group of "change" are similar to those of "problem-focused coping" discussed in literature (Carver, et al., 1989; Furnham & Li, 1993; Walsh, 2008). These strategies are used to deal with difficulties by taking direct actions to make a change to the outside world rather than accepting passively. These strategies are often adopted when the international students believe that the difficulty is able to be solved or the situation can be changed through their own actions. Within this "change" category, four strategies emerged: "planning", "observing" "taking actions" and "suppression".

- "Planning" is usually considered as the first step in the entire coping process. To a great extent, a systematic and practical plan determines the success of the actions, but plans are sometimes changed in accordance with the specific condition.

- “Observing” is a strategy which has rarely been discussed in existing literature. This study found it to be an important strategy and can be regarded as a consideration before or a reference for further actions.
- “Taking action” is the most active strategy to directly deal with problems. The participants in this study usually used it when they were fully prepared and had confidence in solving the problem or making a change to the situation.
- “Suppression” was adopted by participants when they tried to concentrate all their efforts on the problem-solving rather than being distracted by other factors.

The quantitative results in this study showed that “taking action” (Median =4) and “suppression” (Median =4) were two most frequently used strategies for the participants. The participants’ age had significant associations with their attitudes to the “taking action” strategy. Those who were over 24 years old tended to use the strategy of “taking action” more than those who were between 20 to 24 years old. Also, the participants’ English levels were significantly associated with their attitudes to the three strategies of “planning”, “taking action”, and “suppression”. Results showed that those who had a higher English level used these three strategies more frequently than the others.

6.4.2. Adjustment

Another category of coping strategy is “adjustment”. Different from the strategies in the “change” category, strategies in this group are usually adopted when the international students consider that they are not able to deal with the problem or do not have the ability to change the situation. Under such circumstances, they would have to adjust themselves to the environment. This category is defined on the basis of “emotion-focused coping” theories (Chun & Poole, 2009; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Walsh, 2008). The following four strategies were discussed by the participants in this study.

- “Acceptance” means accepting the reality. This strategy was used when the stress could only be accommodated rather than changed. The student participants in this study tended to adopt this strategy in unchangeable

circumstances, such as during cultural conflicts, or when facing differences in the educational system or the way of thinking.

- “Religion” is a coping strategy used to adopt spiritual support by drawing on religious strengths. Some participants responded that relying on a religion could bring spiritual peace into their mind. Such religious and spiritual support was considered to be important in helping them cope with stress and supporting their overall wellbeing.
- “Distraction” is usually used to distract themselves from thinking about the problem and thereby to reduce stress. The participants in this study used this strategy by doing activities such as jogging, listening to music or watching TV or movies..
- “Positive reappraisal” as a strategy was also emphasised by the participants in this study. It was considered to be a very useful strategy as looking at things in a positive way could help them feel optimistic, especially in some unchangeable or difficult circumstances.

The quantitative results of this study indicate that “acceptance” (Median = 4) and “positive reappraisal” (Median = 4) were the two most frequently used strategies among the four. Also, participants’ gender had a significant association with their attitudes to the “positive reappraisal” strategy. The female participants tended to use the “positive reappraisal” strategy more often than the male participants. This finding partially supports Ward and Kennedy’s (2001) study which notes that women are more likely to adopt avoidance coping strategies including “positive reappraisal”. However, it conflicted with some studies (e.g., Amole, 2005; Dafna & Tali, 2005) which argue that men tend to use avoidance coping more than women.

6.4.2. Use of strategies

In addition to categorising the coping strategies, this study also examined the participants’ use and selection of strategies. Most of the participants expressed that they would select coping strategies depending on what type of difficulties or problems they encountered. This is supported by the literature (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). As discussed previously, the participants were more likely to use the

strategies within the “change” group to deal with the problems that were considered to be changeable, whilst they tended to adjust themselves under unchangeable situations. Therefore, as the participants’ responses, they tended to use the direct approach to deal with problems in their study or difficulties in their daily life. However, for some problems such as cultural shocks and psychological problems, such as homesickness, loneliness, and anxiety, they tended to use the “adjustment” strategies. The study also discovered that most participants preferred the “change” strategies to “adjustment” under most circumstances. As noted in literature (Clements & Sawhney, 2000; DeGenova, et al., 2001; Penley, et al., 2002), “change” or problem-focused coping strategies are normally associated with a positive adjustment, which is beneficial to international students’ psychological and social wellbeing. Thus, it can be concluded that most participants had a positive attitude towards the difficulties they encountered. Coping is a complicated process. The boundary between the two categories of coping strategies is not absolute. In most actual conditions, a combination of several strategies would be used to deal with the actual situation.

6.5 Research objective 4: Social support

Social support is considered as another supportive way to assist international students relieve acculturative stress and help them adapt to the new environment successfully. Social support indicates a process of seeking and receiving support from the outer world, whilst coping strategies pay more attention to adjustment of the inner world. Four sources of social support were identified in this research: family, friends, university, and local community. Due to distinctive functions, the four sources play distinctively supportive roles in these students’ sojourn journey (Olson & Shultz, 1994; Ward, et al., 2001). The study discovered that accessibility and effectiveness were two main criteria to evaluate these sources of support. The following sections discuss the four social support sources and international students’ evaluation to these support strategies.

6.5.1. Family

Among these four sources of social support, family was the only source which could not provide “on the spot” support because most of them were far away from the host country (excluding those students who have a family in Australia). In spite of the location factor, family was still regarded as the most original source of support due to its unique biologic and emotional attachments with these students (Williams, 2007). Also, family was perceived as the most reliable and intimate group of people with whom international students could discuss private issues or pour out negative feelings without concerns (Zhai, 2004). Hence, family support was irreplaceable and had its unique advantages compared to other sources of support. A high frequency of contacts with family was beneficial to relieve acculturative stress and help international students to adapt to the new environment. Modern technologies, such as telephone and internet, greatly facilitated this kind of communication (Williams, 2007). Here, family support is discussed from three aspects: emotional, financial and advisory support.

6.5.1.1. Emotional support

Emotional support is one of the most salient functions of family (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Encouragement and care as two positive emotional forms of family support identified in this study. Continuous encouragements could provide a positive strength for international students, making them more confident to overcome difficulties occurring in the acculturation process and helping them relieve negative emotions, such as frustration, depression, and loneliness. Thus, those student participants who were getting more family encouragement tended to be more successful in adjusting themselves and more effective in adapting to the new environment. Another important family support was care. As the participants’ responses, academic performance, health status and security were the aspects that were mostly cared by their families. Care from the family brought great warmth to these international students and thus boost these students’ wellbeing.

6.5.1.2. Financial support and advisory support

Apart from emotional support, families also provided financial and advisory support to international students. Family is the primary source of financial support for the international students (Rosenthal, et al., 2006). As the study shows, 70% of the participants were getting financial support primarily from their families. Adequate financial support reduced the students' financial worries and therefore was beneficial to their health and wellbeing (Galloway & Jenkins, 2005; Mori, 2000). However, as discussed in Section 6.2.3, highly depending on families' financial support would raise these students' a sense of guilt and self-denial and thereby negatively influenced their psychological wellbeing.

Lastly, the family provided advisory support to international students. Although most families were not able to provide "on the spot" support due to the long distance, most international students were still willing to seek advisory support from their families because they are perceived as the most reliable and intimate people (Williams, 2007). It was also found in this study that international students tended to seek support from the older generation and those who had overseas experiences in their families (Root, 1985).

6.5.1.4. Limitations of family support

Since families provided a great support for the emotional, financial and advisory aspects, most of the participants in this study gave a high evaluation on their family support. However, the study found that a small number of students rarely seek support from their families for two reasons. The first reason was that some student participants do not believe that their families were able to provide substantial support because they were far away from the host country. Instead, they considered that frequently asking for support, constantly talking about negative experiences, or highly depending on the family would bring a great financial and/or psychological burden to the family. This group of students tended to be more independent and try to avoid seeking much support from their families. The second reason was the belief of the family. Some families, especially Asian families, had high expectations and pushed their children to be successful both academically and socially, and therefore caused a severe stress on the student (Heggins, 2003; Sue,

1981). Thus, the students from such kind of family tended to conceal the difficulties from their family to avoid losing face in front of the family.

6.5.2. Friends

Support from friends is also named peer support. Most international students would give their preference to peer support while facing difficulties in the host country (Heggins & Jackson, 2003; Zhai, 2004). The main reason of such heavily dependence on peer support is its accessibility. Under some circumstances, it could be more convenient to access friends than other sources, such as the university, family, or community. Also, friends are commonly a group of people who are at the similar age, sharing similar interests and experiences and easily understanding each other (McGrath & Burtcher, 2004; Zhai, 2004). Thus, gaining support from friends was practical and could easily satisfy international students' needs.

6.5.2.1. Advisory support and emotional support

The two functions of peer support were advisory support and emotional support. On the one hand, friend was one of the important advisory conduits from which international students could obtain useful information. Such advisory information could be widely ranging from academic to non-academic aspects. Advisory support from friends could greatly facilitate international students' settlement in the unfamiliar environment academically, socially and psychologically (Ward, et al., 2001; Williams, 2007). On the other hand, friend played an important role in emotional support (Ward, et al., 2001; Williams, 2007). As most of participants in this study that talking to friends was one of the most effective ways to relieve stress, because friends' companionship was very helpful in overcoming negative emotions such as loneliness, depression, homesickness, and anxiety.

6.5.2.2. Issues related to friends support

Advantages of friend support were highly evaluated by the participants, while a small number of related issues were also raised. One of the issues was that international students were inclined to make friends with those people who were from the same nation, who were called co-national friends in literature (Arthur,

2004; Sykes & Eden, 1987; Ward, et al., 2001). It is reasonable and explainable that co-national friends can understand each other better because they speak the same language and share the same culture. However, as Adelman (1988) and Arthur (2004) argue, grouping only with co-national friends and rarely contacting local friends would obstruct international students' engagement into the host society and increase their acculturative stress although it may help relieve their stress in the short term. Quantitative data in this study showed a significant negative association between international students' participation in local activities and their levels of homesickness, loneliness, depression and anxiety. Barriers which obstruct international students' contacts with the local society have been discussed in Section 6.2.4.

Support from friends also has limitations besides one pointed out above. As most international students tend to make friends within the same student group, it makes it hard for them to give each other advices from a professional perspective. Also, there is a mutual influence between these students and their friends. Positive influences would provide an impetus to international students' adaptation, while negative influences would increase the stress in the process socio-cultural adaptation. There is limited literature discussing friends' influences on international students, but some research on friends' influences on adolescence could be regarded as references (Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Knecht, 2008).

6.5.3. University

Universities are professional educational organisations which do not only convey academic knowledge but also provide an opportunity for international students to contact with the local society and understand the local culture. Thus, support provided by the university would be more professional than other sources of support from both the academic and socio-cultural aspects. Support provided by the university is grouped into two categories: academic and administrative support.

6.5.3.1. Academic support

From the academic aspect, most of the student interviewees gave a positive evaluation to the quality of education and showed a satisfaction with the academic support provided by the University of Tasmania. Academic teaching staff play an important role in providing academic support for international students. Many students have experiences, either face-to-face or by email, of seeking support from lecturers and tutors in regarding to academic problems, assignments or other learning tasks. In most cases, they can get efficient feedback and professional support.

However, a small number of the student participants showed dissatisfactions with the academic support provided by the university. They were disappointed by not receiving additional attention. They believed that lecturers and tutors should pay more attention to international students who were generally disadvantaged in English language competency and unfamiliarity with the Australian educational style compared to Australian students. However, the lecturer participants' responses to this issue were divided. While some of them thought that educators should pay more attention to international students, the others proposed a totally opposite view that special treatments should not be given to international students as all students should be given equal support. Thus, whether to provide extra assistance to international students has become a controversial issue among academics in the university.

Some student participants were not satisfied with academic support provided by the university because they had experiences of being treated unfairly by academic staff at the university. They said they did not get as much academic support as local students and even refused support by some academic staff and the faculties due to their status as international students. Such experiences caused these students' negative feedback to the university, which may increase their acculturative stress accordingly.

6.5.3.2. Administrative support

Apart from academic support, administrative support is another important part of university support. Such support is mainly offered by the International Service or some other administrative departments at the university. The participants gave higher responses to the International Service which was set up to support current international students studying at UTAS. International students could access this service for some practical problems such as visa issues, legal problems, or travelling issues (Jenkins & Galloway, 2009; Zhai, 2004). If the problem was beyond the International Service's abilities, the international student would be referred to other relevant organisations or government departments, such as psychological counselling and immigration office. The International Service also played an important role in promoting intercultural communications, holding on-campus activities, such as Multicultural Day, Harmony Day, and celebrations for various cultural festivals.

In evaluation of the administrative support provided, efficiency and effectiveness are two essential criteria. In this study, some international student participants were highly satisfied with the support provided by the International Service. In contrast, those who were not satisfied with the International Service tended to have complaints about the slow responses and unclear instructions provided.

While the International Service was believed to be helpful by some international students, some participants rarely or even never accessed International Service or other administrative departments at the university (Johnsom, 1993). The lack of knowledge about the services provided was one of the main reasons that obstructed international students from accessing administrative support at the university (Sawir, et al., 2008; Zhai, 2004). Another reason for rarely accessing university administrative departments was that most students preferred to solve problems by themselves or seek support from friends. These students would turn to International Service or other university administrative departments for help only when the problem was beyond their own or their friends' capabilities.

6.5.4. Community

Apart from family, friends and university, local communities were another source of social support. However, the study found that international students rarely accessed the local community to seek support as about one third of the student participants in the study gave such responses. However, as to the reasons why they do not seek support from the local community, the international students and the university staff's opinions were divided. In views of the international students, they thought that support from other sources, including family, friends, and university, was adequate and there was no need to seek support from the local community. However, university staff considered cultural differences as the greatest barrier. Differences in languages, customs, values and lifestyles tended to greatly hinder the international students to closely contact the local community. The view of the university staff is supported by McGrath and Burtcher's (2004) study which argue that cultural difference is the main cause of low rate of seeking support from the local community by international students.

Nevertheless, those international students who had experiences in seeking and receiving support from the local community considered churches and other religious communities as a major area of community support (Butcher, Lim, McGrath, & Revis, 2002; Solberg, Choi, Ritsma, & Jolly, 1994). Most of them gave a highly positive evaluation to the support they gained from these local religious groups. As their responses, these religious groups had become a strong spiritual strength and help them go through the difficult time. With the help of religious beliefs or faiths, international students' acculturative stress and negative emotions were effectively relieved. This study also found that international students' local friends were mostly from local church or other religious communities (McGrath & Burtcher, 2004). In the views of these students, these local religious groups served as the bridge between the international students and the local society. Thus, positive contacts with local religious communities may help promote international students' social and psychological wellbeing.

6.6 Research Objective 5: Suggestions and recommendations

Findings related to four research objectives were addressed in the last four sections. Five adjustment issues including academic issues, basic living conditions, financial concerns, social contact, and racism discrimination were discussed as significant problems which affected international students' health and wellbeing. Demographic variables such as age, gender, length of stay in Tasmania, and English were identified as influential factors. Also, two groups of coping strategies and four sources of social support were examined to help these students adapt to the unfamiliar environment. In this section, the fifth research objective is discussed and some suggestions provided by participants to current and prospective international students and Australian universities are presented.

6.6.1. Focusing on knowledge acquisition and skills development

To a great extent, international students' experiences in the host country can be considered as a process of knowledge acquirement and skill development. Two important skills were suggested to be well developed by the participants were English language skill and the time management skill.

6.6.1.1. English language skill

English language skill is emphasized as it does not only greatly impact international students' academic performance but also significantly influences their psychological and social adaptation when studying in a English speaking country (Kell & Vogl, 2007). This study suggested that both current and prospective international students should make effort to improve their English ability. Current international should take advantage of the opportunity of studying in Australia and try to contact Australian local people and society because there is a positive interconnection between English language proficiency and social interactions (Kell & Vogl, 2007). For those prospective students, they should prepare themselves in terms of English language abilities before coming to Australia. It was suggested that listening to ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) and watching Australian TV programs or

movies were not only a good way to become familiar with the Australian accent and expressions but also a conduit to know more about the Australian culture (Kell & Vogl, 2007).

6.6.1.2. Time management skill

Another important skill was suggested to be well developed by the participants was time management skill because the skill is significantly associated with students' academic performance and other aspects of their life (Britton & Tesser, 1991; Macan, Shahani, Dipboye, & Phillips, 1990). In this study, some students said that they had difficulties in dealing with intense study workload, or in balancing between part-time jobs and study. The great pressure caused by these problems can make these students anxious and depressed. Thus, it was suggested that international students should pay attention to develop time management skill because advanced skills in organising and managing time may not only help avoid such problems, but also bring a high level of psychological wellbeing.

6.6.2. Suggestion 2: Development of personalities

It was suggested in the previous sections that international students should consider their sojourn journey as a process of knowledge acquirement and skill development. Besides, international students were suggested to pay attention to developing their personalities in this process of intercultural contacts. . It was another aspects emphasized by the participants in this study.

6.6.2.1. Be open

The study suggested that international students should be open-minded, actively engaging with the local community rather than confining themselves within their own ethnic groups. The findings of this study indicated that those participants who had more local Australian friends and had more opportunities to participate in local activities had a lower level of homesickness, loneliness, anxiety, and depression. This means that adequate contacts with the local society are positively related to their psychological wellbeing (Rosenthal, et al., 2006). Besides, knowing and understanding the local society and culture is one of the important purposes for

most international students to study abroad (Brislin & Kim, 2003; Butcher & McGrath, 2004). Australia is a multicultural country that can provide more chances to contact with people from different ethnic backgrounds. Thus, international students who are studying in Australia should take this advantage, communicate with people from different ethnic groups and learn about their cultures. Staying only within their own ethnic group is not beneficial for the international students' social adaptation as they would not be able to take full advantage of this cultural learning opportunity.

6.6.2.2. Be positive

The study also suggested that international students should have a positive attitude. Moving from a familiar environment to an unfamiliar context, international students may encounter a range of adjustment problems. It was suggested that these students should maintain a positive attitude when looking at the situation and remain optimistic, especially in unchangeable circumstances. As Ryff (1995) argues, a positive attitude to self and others can improve people's wellbeing. International students' psychological and social wellbeing would also be boosted by such positive attitudes.

6.6.2.3. Thinking before taking actions

International students were also advised to make a careful consideration before taking actions. Most international students are far away from their home countries and families and would be less supported than domestic students. Premature actions may cause them troubles because of their unfamiliarity with the host country's social, legal and political systems. Also, international students are a group of students commonly with a young average age. Taking the participants in this study for example, more than 60% of them were younger than the age of 24. They still need to be supported and advised by experienced or more mature people. Therefore, making a reasonable plan in advance and/or seeking counsel from other experienced people were strongly suggested. These strategies can help international students deal with problems and avoid being involved in conflicts.

6.6.2.4. Good manners

Lastly, international students were encourage to be mindful of their behaviour and have good manners because cultivated behaviours are commonly regarded as a reflection of a person's good education and high social status. Displaying good behaviour, including obeying the local law and regulations, is one of the basic requirements for these students who are staying in a host country. Tertiary education provides an opportunity for these students not only to acquire knowledge but also to learn what is considered good behaviour in the host country. Thus, international students should fully take this advantage to cultivate their manners.

6.6.3. Suggestions to university

The previous sections provided current and prospective international students with some suggestions from two aspects: knowledge and skills acquisition and personality development. This section focuses on giving suggestions from the university's perspective in order to improve university services and better meet students' needs.

6.6.3.1. Education as priority

Providing good quality education is the ultimate purpose of all universities. A university's teaching quality and academic achievements are significantly associated with reputation (Soutar & Turner, 2002), and then a positive academic reputation is one of the most important factors in attracting future international students in the education market (Lin, 1997; Soutar & Turner, 2002). Thus, it is suggested that universities should regard a high standard education as the first priority.

6.6.3.2. Services consciousness

Also, it was suggested that the university have a higher level of service consciousness. Students who are studying at this university should be considered as clients and be treated with respect. The university should understand its students' needs and provide practical services and reactive care to satisfy their requirements (Butcher & McGrath, 2004). The emphasis here is that international students

experience more problems than domestic students because of their disadvantages in English language proficiency, unfamiliarity with the Australian academic and socio-cultural context (Mullins, et al., 1995b). Thus, it would be more important for the university to pay more attention to its international students, provide special services and help them to adapt to the academic context.

6.6.3.3. Providing proactive care

Apart from reactive care, the participants in this study suggested the university's International Service should provide more proactive care and information in relation to academic orientation, introduction to the Australian culture, potential adjustment problems, and coping strategies to international student prior to their departure from the home countries to build their cross-cultural awareness (Brislin & Kim, 2003; Butcher & McGrath, 2004).

6.7 Conclusion

By combining the results that have emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and comparing them with relevant theories in literature, findings were presented according to the five research objectives in this chapter. Generally, these international students were moderately satisfied with their life in Tasmania and had a positive attitude to coping with their acculturative stress. Thus, it can be argued that international students' experiences are not all characterized by negative responses. Instead, they are group of people with tenacious survival abilities and a strong willingness to succeed. Five salient influential factors including academic issues, basic living conditions, financial worries, social contact and racial discrimination, were significantly related to international students' physical health and psychological and social wellbeing. Besides, the participants' demographic factors, such as gender, age, lengths of stay and English levels were found to have influential relationships with the participants' health and wellbeing as well. Two categories of coping strategies, "change" and "adjustment", and four sources of social support, including family, friends, university and community were also discussed in this chapter. Lastly, suggestions to current and prospective students

and recommendations to the university given by the participants were provided in improving international students' wellbeing in the future.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Overview

The previous chapter gave a comprehensive discussion of the findings emerging from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis as well as from in-depth comparisons with relevant theories in literature. These findings were presented in order of five research objectives. The Research aim was achieved at this stage. It can be concluded generally that the international tertiary students were moderately satisfied with their life in Tasmania and with a relatively high level of health and wellbeing.

As the conclusion of the thesis, this chapter provides an overview of the entire research journey. The original intention of this study with a few adjustments made later on is presented at the beginning, followed by an overall discussion of the findings. According to these findings, the study also provides some recommendations and implications with regard to international students, Australian academics, university administrative services, and local communities. Lastly, a few suggestions for further research are presented in this study.

7.2 The research journey

The relationship between a researcher and his or her research is very intricately complex. It is virtually impossible to cast aside the researchers' ideology and experiences in their research, particularly in the fields of social sciences and humanities. In order to fully understand the research process, it is both helpful and interesting to bring into this conclusion of the thesis as well of the research journey the personal background which led to the conduct of this study. The research journey was initially inspired by the researcher's own experiences of studying in Australia. A few years ago, the researcher decided to study overseas in order to seek for high quality education and a good career and professional development.

Due to the excellent educational reputation in the international education market, Australia was finally chosen as the destination. With expectations, aspirations, and dreams, the researcher landed on this beautiful island state and started to take a Master course in the University of Tasmania in 2008. As most international students, the researcher did encounter many adjustment problems in her acculturation from her home country to Australia. These problems included language barriers, general living difficulties, academic problems, and culture shocks. She also experienced various negative emotions of homesickness, depression, anxiety, and loneliness in the process of psychological adjustment. All these experiences inspired her to investigate the international students' life satisfaction and their perceptions of health and wellbeing in Australia.

As a journey, what was planned could be changed to accommodate the dynamic situation of the research process. Two important adjustments were made in the process of the research design. A brief review of literature indicated that health behaviours are closely associated generally with health and wellbeing. However, there were only few previous studies concerning the association between the health behaviours of international students and their health and wellbeing. Thus, the international students' attitudes to health behaviours were added to the questionnaire as an important factor to be examined in this study. Another adjustment was made to involve coping strategies and the available social support in this study since the two factors favourably related to the international students' adaptation and enhancing their health and wellbeing. At the initial stage, both coping strategies and social support were designed in the questionnaire as two sections. Later, the researcher found that close-ended questions in the questionnaire were insufficient for examining participants' in-depth perceptions and evaluations with regard to social support. Thus, the "social support" section was removed from the questionnaire and fully examined in the interview. Through a few changes and adjustments, five research objectives were finalized to achieve the research aim.

The study was conducted within the context of the University of Tasmania. The university was chosen as a research case for two reasons: one was that the

researcher was then undertaking a PhD at this university; another was that Tasmania belongs to a regional area in Australia and there were few studies concerning the international students' health and wellbeing conducted in such a rural context. Differences between urban and rural areas would be discovered from this study. With a full ethics approval (Reference Number: H10957), this study recruited a total of 341 international students and 5 university staff members to give responses to various issues related to international students' health and wellbeing. Data collected by means of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews were analysed respectively by PASW (Version 18) and NVivo (Version 8). Findings related to five research objectives were in-depth discussed in the previous chapter. The next section gives an overall discussion of these findings.

7.3 Overall discussion of findings

Five research objectives were achieved through the findings emerging from both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and from comparisons with relevant theories in literature. These Findings are summarized in the following sections. The study discovered that academic issues, basic living conditions, financial worries, social contact and racial discrimination were five salient factors influencing these international students' health and wellbeing; the participants' demographic variables such as age, gender, length of stay in Tasmania, and English proficiency are also identified as influential factors. Besides, the study revealed that "change" and "adjustment" were two categories of coping strategies used by these students. Family, friends, university, and local communities were four main sources of social support in the eyes of these participants. Lastly, the study gave some suggestions for improving the life and conditions of current and prospective international students studying in Australian universities.

7.3.1 Research objective 1

Five salient adjustment problems influencing the international students' health and wellbeing were identified in this study: academic problems, basic living conditions, financial worries, social contact and racial discrimination. Except academic

difficulties, other four issues discussed in this study more or less reflected the unique characteristics of international tertiary students in an Australian regional area.

The study found that academic-related problems were of major concern to most international students. Their academic performance was significantly associated with their psychological wellbeing. The language barrier and unfamiliarity with educational style were identified as the two most salient problems which greatly obstruct their academic adaptation. Also, intense workloads and competition with Australian and other international students with better academic performance caused significant pressure on these students. It is worth noting that while most literature concentrate on the negative aspects of academic or even cultural transition, this study found that academic achievement, the development of abilities and the acquisition of skills as well as establishment of networking were three noteworthy benefits gained by these students who have the experience of studying overseas.

Basic living conditions including accommodation, diet and transportation were in relation to the international students' life satisfaction in Tasmania. Most international students were satisfied with accommodation in Tasmania. Price, location and the relationship with landlords and housemates were three factors related to these students' evaluation of their accommodation. Besides, the unavailability of ethnic foods and lack of the traditional family support were two reasons leading to an increase in eating fast food and skipping breakfast. The rate of smoking and drinking were not high among these international students in Tasmania. The study also found that international students were moderately satisfied with transport in Tasmania. Service, security and price were identified as three factors related to their evaluation of transport facilities.

Also, the study discovered that nearly 90% of international students in Tasmania had different degrees of financial worries. The growth of tuition fees, the lack of scholarships, the increase of living costs, the occurrence of unexpected events, and the lack of job opportunities in the regional area were major influential factors

which aggravated their financial concerns. Financial pressure exerted a negative influence on these students' psychological wellbeing.

In relation to the socio-cultural aspect, the extent of social contact with the local community is closely associated with the international students' social and psychological wellbeing. However, the reality shown in this study was that most international students did not have meaningful contacts with the local community. Five barriers that obstruct international students' community contacts were discovered in this study: cultural differences, inadequate English language competency, intercultural misunderstandings, religious differences, and psychological factors.

Racial discrimination as one of the important influential factors exerted an intense negative influence on the international students' psychological wellbeing. The study discovered that the incidence rate of racial discrimination in Tasmania was higher than other urban areas in Australia, and also there was more overt racial discrimination happening off campus than that on campus. Most international students preferred to use tolerance to cope with racial discrimination. Perceptions of less powerfulness, a lack of social resources in negotiations and a fear of causing further trouble were three main reasons identified in this study.

7.3.2 Research objective 2

The international students' demographic factors such as gender, age, length of stay, and English proficiency were examined in this study in search of the relationship between these factors and their perceptions of the relevant health issues.

The findings of this study partially supported the view that females may find it more difficult than males in adjusting to an unfamiliar environment. However, females are more positive than males in maintaining a healthy status, such as dietary balance and substance independence. In terms of age, the study also found that the more mature students had a higher level of satisfaction with their own academic performance and the university service in information-providing than younger students. Also, the more mature students feel more secure than younger students in

this unfamiliar environment. Younger students however felt more inclusive in class than the mature students. In relation to their health perceptions, the study found that the more mature students displayed a more realistic and positive attitude than the younger students.

Apart from gender and age, the study also noted that the length of stay was an important demographic factor which influenced the international students' capacity to adjust to the new environment. Findings showed that those who stayed longer in Tasmania had higher levels of socio-cultural and psychological adaptation. However, the length of stay was positively associated with unhealthy dietary behaviours, such as eating fast food and skipping breakfast.

English proficiency could be the most important demographic factor because it closely related to the international students' academic, socio-cultural, and psychological adaptation. Results indicated that those who have a higher English proficiency were more adaptive to the new academic and socio-cultural environment than those who have a lower English proficiency. Also, these students had a higher level of psychological wellbeing in the process of socio-cultural transition.

7.3.3 Research objective 3

Two groups of coping strategies were identified in this study: "change" and "adjustment". These strategies within the group of "change" are often adopted when the difficulty is perceived to be solved or the situation could be changed through their own actions. In this study, four strategies - "planning", "observing", "taking action" and "suppression" were categorized into the group of "change". Among these, "taking action" and "suppression" were the top two most frequently used by the participants in this study. Also, the study found that the more mature students tended to use "take action" than the younger student, and those who command more fluency in English frequently used strategies of "planning", "taking action" and "suppression" than those who are at a lower English fluency.

Another category was "adjustment" coping. It is usually used when students

considered that they are not able to deal with the problem or change the situation. Under this circumstance, they need to adjust to the environment. “Acceptance”, “religion”, “distraction”, and “positive reappraisal” were four strategies identified within this group. “Acceptance” and “positive reappraisal” were the top two most frequently used strategies in this group. Also, female students tended to use “positive reappraisal” than males.

It is importantly noting that these students prefer “change” to “adjustment”. “Change” is commonly regarded as positive coping and closely related to the individual’s psychological and social wellbeing. Thus, it can be concluded that most international students in Tasmania had a positive attitude to their life in the foreign country. In fact, the boundary between the two groups of coping is not absolute. In most “real life” conditions, a combination of strategies worked together to deal with that situation.

7.3.4 Research objective 4

In this study, social support was defined as a conduit of seeking and receiving assist from other friends or from other members of the community, whilst coping strategy was a process of dealing with difficulties on their own or making an psychological adjustment. Four sources of social support were identified in this study: family, friends, university and local community.

Because of the unique biological and emotional attachment, family is regarded as the most reliable and intimate group of people to discuss private issues and pour out negative feelings. The study found that the family usually provided support in the emotional, financial and advisory aspects. However, two limitations of family support were addressed in this study. One was that most international students’ families were unable to provide “on the spot” support. Another was that some family’s high expectations caused great pressure to these international students and this factor made e these students reluctant to turn to their family for support.

Most international students heavily relied on the support of friends because this was easier to access compared with other sources of support. Also, friends tended

to empathise and be understanding in such experiences and feelings. The study discovered that advisory and emotional support were two of the more important functions of a network of friends. However, it was argued that the tendency of only grouping with co-national friends and rarely with Australians negatively influenced international students' psychological and social wellbeing. In addition, friends would be the group of individuals who themselves need to be supported as well. The study also proposed a view that the influence of friends was importantly related to the international students' adaptation. The positive influence would result in a positive impact on the international students' psychological and social wellbeing, whilst being a negative influence would increase these students' acculturative stress.

The university's support concentrated on the academic and administrative areas. Most international students were satisfied with the academic support provided by the university. However, a few student participants expressed their dissatisfaction in the interviews. Less attention and unfair treatment by academic staff were two issues complained by these international students. Besides, the administrative support of the International Service was widely discussed in this study. Efficiency and effectiveness were two criteria used to evaluate this aspect of support. Lack of knowledge of services and the priority of friends' or family support were identified as two reasons why these students rarely accessed university International Service provided by the university.

The local community was one of the support sources discussed in this study. Rarely seeking support from this category was due to cultural differences and the preferred support from other sources. Church and other religious groups played an important role in community support. Religious support was one of the main sources of accessed by these students. Supported international students received spiritual strengths from their religion as such strengths can help them free from negative emotions. Also, such communities provided a positive opportunity for these international students to develop meaningful contact with the local society and culture.

7.3.5 Research objective 5

The participants provided some suggestions to international students and university. Acquisition of knowledge and skills and development of personalities were two suggestions provided to current and prospective international students in this study. English competency and time management skills as the two important skills were emphasized by the participants. It was suggested that international students should take advantage of studying in Australia and improve their English proficiency to communicate satisfactorily. Also, international students are advised to develop time management skills to enhance their quality of life.

Besides, it was suggested that international students should take the opportunity to well cultivate their personalities and enhance their psychological and social wellbeing. Firstly, international students were suggested to be more open-minded, actively engaging with local community rather than just confining themselves within their own ethnic groups. Secondly, they were advised to be positive because a positive or an optimistic attitude would be beneficial to their psychological wellbeing. Thirdly, it was suggested that international students should pay attention to developing their cooperative awareness and understudying how to cooperate with others because cooperation is essential for a person's overall development not only in their personality but also in their future career and other professional areas. Fourthly, international students were suggested take a deep thought before taking action when dealing with problems. Troubles are easily caused by premature actions because of international students' unfamiliarity with the social, legal and political system of the host country, the lack of traditional support and their youth. Lastly, participants suggested that international students should pay attention to having good manners to respect their educational background and culture.

The study also provided some advices to the university. Excellent teaching quality and outstanding academic achievement significantly contribute to a university's reputation. Good reputation is also one of the most important factors to attract international students in the international education market. Hence, the participants suggested that a university should improve the quality of education. It was also suggested that the university should be dedicated to improve quality of

services, understanding international students' needs and providing efficient and effective services. Proactive care was also proposed by some participants in this study. The university should provide clear information about academic orientation, potential adjustment problems, and strategies to help international students, especially those prospective and new arrived students to smoothly adapt to the new environment.

7.4 Recommendations and implications

Findings of this study were summarised in the last section. In this section, 6 recommendations derived from insights gained from this study as well as from the life experiences of the researcher are presented. These recommendations would be implicated in a broad educational and social context.

7.4.1 Recommendation 1: International students should increase health awareness

The study suggests that international students should pay attention to increasing their health awareness. Findings of this study indicated that international students were at high risk when it comes to an unhealthy lifestyle, such as frequently eating fast food, skipping breakfast, rarely eating fruit and vegetables, and rarely exercising. Although the reasons are various, the lack of health awareness and the absence of knowledge of the behaviour-health link would be the fundamental cause. Many students do not realize how much damage could be caused by long-term unhealthy habits and lifestyles. Therefore, it is vital to come with an adequate knowledge of health, consciously improving their health awareness and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. A balanced and nutritive dietary intake with a regular exercise programme brings enormous benefits to a student's physical and psychological wellbeing.

7.4.2 Recommendation 2: International students should develop a cross-cultural awareness and improve cross-cultural competency

Cultural differences are one of the main barriers hindering international students'

successful cultural adaptation. The study's findings noted that many problems international students encountered include language barrier, unfamiliarity with educational style, different ethnic food and dietary habits, inadequate local social contact, racial discrimination and rarely seeking support from the local community all were in varying degrees relating to a deficiency of cross-cultural awareness and low intercultural competency. These problems increase these students' acculturative stress and negatively influence their psychological and social wellbeing. Thus, in order to release their acculturative stress and improve their health and wellbeing, it is suggested that international students should pay more attention to increasing their cultural sensitivity and developing their cross-cultural awareness. A fact that cultural differences and the resultant cultural misunderstandings or even conflicts unavoidably exist within the cross-cultural context should be understood. Also, these students should concentrate on improving their cultural competence through a professional education and training, improving the target language proficiency and extending experiences in the target culture.

7.4.3 Recommendation 3: Australian academics should be more sensitive to language difficulties experienced by international students

Three suggestions to the university were provided by the participants: treating education as priority, improving service consciousness, and providing proactive care. They were discussed in the last chapter. Here, on the basis of suggestions raised by the participants and issues emerged from the study, the researcher provides the following three recommendations to Australian educational institutes. The first recommendation is that Australian academics should be more sensitive to language difficulties experienced by international students.

The study found that low English proficiency would be one of the greatest academic barriers obstructing the international students' academic adaptation. Thus, it is suggested that academics need to be more sensitive to language difficulties experienced by international students, and pay more attention to these students in class. If possible, academics are encouraged to acquire knowledge in linguistics and

to better understand the root cause of these language and learning problems so as to offer sufficient and comprehensive language assistance.

7.4.4 Recommendation 4: Australian academics should value international students' prior learning styles

Apart from language difficulties, an unfamiliar educational style is another barrier encountered by international students. Prior different educational experience was identified in this study as a root cause of difficulties in adapting to the Australian teaching and learning environment. However, too much emphasis on handicaps of a prior educational style may result in perceiving these students' prior educational style and the learning skills acquired as of little value or of little use. Indeed, it is argued, for example, that memory skills developed through rote learning are as valuable as that of critical analysis (Spizzica, 1997). There is neither "good" nor "bad" between western and eastern educational styles. Australian academics should not devalue an international student's prior learning experience. Instead, they should treat these students as only lacking in learning skills which are important for success in a western educational environment. What they need to do is to understand the skills which these students bring with them and utilise it as a base on which to add new skills.

7.4.5 Recommendation 5: University administrative support should be efficient and effective

In this study, efficiency and effectiveness were treated as two essentials in evaluating university administrative support. An autocratic style and a low efficient response would cause students' disappointment, which may lead to a negative evaluation of the services provided. Thus, in order to improve the quality of university's services, it is highly suggested to simplify complex procedures and reduce unnecessary steps to improve practical efficiency. However, a university is an enormous organisation and thus the simplification of procedures is not easy. Therefore, it could be more practical to clarify every procedure to students or clients in order for them to understand what steps they need to take. This could relieve the

students' negative emotions and reduce their complaints. . Apart from efficiency, effectiveness of services should be also taken into consideration. University administrative staff, especially those who are providing support to the international students, should adequately understand the students' needs, their problems and disadvantages. Only this way can provide a much needed and effective support.

7.4.6 Recommendation 6: Local communities should take more interest in international students

Support from local communities was mentioned in this study. It was found out that local religious communities such as the church had been playing an important role in providing support to international students. In turn, they received very positive feedbacks from these students. However, other local communities, such as the sports and arts clubs, non-government organizations (NGO), and ethical associations were not highly valued by the participants. In fact, local communities can be a very supportive source in helping students quickly settle in the unfamiliar environment and smoothly engage into the local society. In this sense, support from local communities can effectively reduce these students' acculturative stress and boost their psychological and socio-cultural wellbeing. Hence, this study suggests that such communities should pay more attention to international students, and provide a support that would assist them in adapting to the new environment.

7.5 Future of the research

In achieving the research aim and objectives, literature gaps have been filled by the findings in this study. The findings indicated that academic issues (e.g., language barriers, unfamiliarity with the Australian tertiary educational style, intense workloads, pressure, and academic benefits), basic living condition (e.g., accommodation, diet and other health behaviours, and transportation), financial worries, social contact and racial discrimination were salient problems significantly related to the international students' health and wellbeing. By comparison with other studies, distinctive features of international tertiary students in an Australian regional area were clarified in this study. Also, the participants' demographic

variables, such as age, gender, length of stay in Tasmania, and English proficiency were identified as influential factors. Besides, international students' usage of coping strategies and the relationship with demographic factors were identified in this study. Moreover, the evaluation of social supports was discussed in this study. Lastly, the study provided some suggestions for enhancing these students' health and wellbeing in their acculturation into a new social and cultural environment.

More issues emerged as the study processed and was completed. Some issues cannot be addressed in this study because of the limited scope of the thesis. The following areas could be explored in further research:

- To undertake a comparison analysis between international students' psychological and social wellbeing and that of domestic students in Australia;
- To examine the differences between the international tertiary students' wellbeing with that of the secondary or primary students in Australia;
- To investigate the health and wellbeing of international students who are taking vocational courses in Australia;
- To examine benefits that international students obtain from their experiences in studying abroad;
- To explore their experiences after completing their studies and returning to their home country;
- To make a comparison analysis of usage of coping strategies between international students and domestic students in Australia;
- To examine the international students' evaluation of various support programmes.

7.6 Conclusion

With the vigorous development of international education after World War II, international students have become one of the most dynamic groups of sojourners contributing greatly to the receiving countries, especially in economy and culture. They have attracted more and more research interest in different disciplines. In most previous studies, international students were perceived as a vulnerable group of people who are susceptible to various physical diseases and psychological problems

due to linguistic, cultural and religious differences or barriers arising from the environmental transition. They are, however, a group of people with tenacious survival abilities and a strong willingness to face challenges. International students should not be perceived as foreigners in a foreign land. Instead, they should be welcomed as important members of a global village where peaceful co-existence and intercultural enhancement are much needed in a rapidly changing and paradoxically interactive world.

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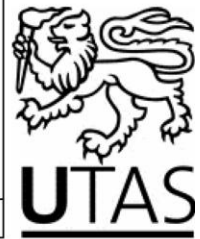
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Appendix 1 Ethics Approval

Social Science Ethics Officer
Private Bag 01 Hobart
Tasmania 7001 Australia
Tel: (03) 6226 2764
Fax: (03) 6226 7148
Marilyn.Knott@utas.edu.au



MEMORANDUM

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (TASMANIA) NETWORK

FULL COMMITTEE ETHICS APPLICATION APPROVAL

15 March 2010

Dr Quynh Le
Rural Health
Private Bag 1372
Launceston

Dear Dr Le

Ethics Reference: H10957

Project Title:

Health and Wellbeing of International Students in an Australia Tertiary Context.

PhD candidate: Ms Yun Yue

The Tasmania Social Sciences HREC Ethics Committee approved the above project on 11 March 2010.

Please note that this approval is for four years and is conditional upon receipt of an annual Progress Report. Ethics approval for this project will lapse if a Progress Report is not submitted.

The following conditions apply to this approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in suspension or discontinuation of approval.

1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval, to ensure the project is conducted as approved by the Ethics Committee, and to notify the Committee if any investigators are added to, or cease involvement with, the project.
2. Complaints: If any complaints are received or ethical issues arise during the course of the project, investigators should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 03 6226 7479 or human.ethics@utas.edu.au.
3. Incidents or adverse effects: Investigators should notify the Ethics Committee immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

4. Amendments to Project: Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval is obtained from the Ethics Committee. Please submit an Amendment Form (available on our website) to notify the Ethics Committee of the proposed modifications.
5. Annual Report: Continued approval for this project is dependent on the submission of a Progress Report by the anniversary date of your approval. You will be sent a courtesy reminder closer to this date. **Failure to submit a Progress Report will mean that ethics approval for this project will lapse.**
6. Final Report: A Final Report and a copy of any published material arising from the project, either in full or abstract, must be provided at the end of the project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "J. Bruce Schmidt".

Ethics Executive Officer

Appendix 2 Ethics application

- 2.1. Information sheet for survey participants
- 2.2. Information sheet for interview participants
- 2.3. Information sheet for survey distributors
- 2.4. Consent form for interview participants
- 2.5. Consent form for survey distributors
- 2.6. Flyer for participants' recruitment
- 2.7. Initially designed questionnaire instrument
- 2.8. Final version of the questionnaire instrument
- 2.9. Interview questions for students
- 2.10. Interview questions for staff members



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UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RURAL HEALTH

Information Sheet for Survey Participants

Title: Health and Wellbeing of International Students in an Australian Tertiary Context

Name of Investigators:

This study is a Doctor of Philosophy research project. The Chief investigator and Co-investigators are Dr Quynh Lê, Dr Rosa McManamey and Dr Thao Lê who are the supervisors of student investigator Yun (Maria) YUE.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are to investigate the factors that influence international students' health and wellbeing, to examine types of coping strategies used by international students to adjust themselves to the new environment, and to evaluate different sources of social support and their effectiveness.

Benefit of the Study

The major benefit of being involved is the good chance to share your views on the adjustment problems you have encountered, effective coping strategies that have been used and ways to obtain effective social support from families, friends and universities in your daily life and academic context. You may also offer suggestions for future international students who intend to study in Australia.

Possible Risks

By sharing your views and experiences, you may recall some unpleasant memories which could lead to a number of potential harms and discomfort, such as psychological problems, including anger, anxiety and depression. If you feel distressed or uncomfortable while filing in this survey questionnaire, you should ring Lifeline counselling helpline. The number to ring is 13 11 14. This confidential free service is a 24-hour telephone counselling services at the cost of a local call.

Study Procedures

Participation in this study involves filling out a survey questionnaire which will take about 10 minutes to complete. Copies of the questionnaires will be available both online and in print. With the permission of International Office, hardcopies of the questionnaire will be provided at the reception desk of the office. A drop box will also be provided at the reception for the participants to put the completed questionnaires in. If you prefer to participate online, a URL would be sent through a Survey Monkey website to your official email address, and the completed questionnaires will be sent directly back to the website.

Your completion and return of the survey questionnaire indicates your consent to participate in this study.

It is important that you understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary.

Data storage

All of the research data will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of Department of Rural Health, University of Tasmania. The data will be destroyed after a period of five years from thesis submission by placing them in sealed bags which will then be removed and shredded by a contractor employed specifically to remove confidential waste from the University of Tasmania. Please note that the online questionnaire will be managed by Survey Monkey in the USA which stores all the online questionnaire data of this project. The data will be removed from Survey Monkey at the completion of data collection. Electronic data will be deleted from the secure servers of the Department of Rural Health after five years from thesis submission.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Please note that completion and submission of the survey constitutes consent to participate in the study. As the survey is anonymous, it will be impossible for us to track your completed questionnaire and therefore data cannot be withdrawn. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

Ethics approval and concerns/complaints:

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (reference number: H10957). If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, you should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants.

Results of Investigation

The thesis will be made publicly available via Australian Digital Theses which can be accessed at UTAS Library and/or in the form of publications (e.g. journals, book chapters) derived from this study. Participants who require access to the research findings of this study will be given the web address of the thesis and/or publication.

Contact persons

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study, please feel free to contact either Dr. Quynh Lê on ph (03) 6324 4053 or Yun Yue on ph (03) 6324 4000. You are welcome to contact either of us at any time to discuss issues relating to this research study.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Dr. Quynh Lê

Dr Rosa McManamey

Dr Thao Lê

Yun YUE

Information Sheet for Interview Participants

Title: Health and Wellbeing of International Students in an Australia Tertiary Context

Name of Investigators:

This study is a Doctor of Philosophy research project. The Chief investigator and Co-investigators are Dr Quynh Lê, Dr Rosa McManamey and Dr Thao Lê who are the supervisors of student investigator Yun (Maria) YUE.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are to investigate the factors that influence international students' health and wellbeing, to examine types of coping strategies used by international students to adjust themselves to the new environment, and to evaluate different sources of social support and their effectiveness.

Benefit of the Study

The major benefit of being involved is the good chance to share your views on the adjustment problems you have encountered, effective coping strategies that have been used and ways to obtain effective social support from families, friends and universities in your daily life and academic context. You may also offer suggestions for future international students who intend to study in Australia.

Possible Risks

By sharing your views and experiences, you may recall some unpleasant memories which could lead to a number of potential harms and discomfort, such as psychological problems, including anger, anxiety and depression. If you feel distressed or uncomfortable during interview time, you should ring Lifeline counseling helpline. The number to ring is 13 11 14. This confidential free service is a 24-hour telephone counselling services at the cost of a local call.

Study procedures

1. Informational sheet for interview participants and interview consent form of interview will be provided at the reception desks of UTAS International Service for pick up by international students and staff who are interested to in participating to pick up. Interested students and staff can contact the researcher of this study via the contact details written mentioned in the information sheet.
2. Interview schedules will be arranged between the project student investigator and volunteer survey participants. The follow-up interview will take 30 to 40 minutes. The interview will be held either at students meeting rooms or other convenient public places by arrangement between the researchers and participants.

3. A list of questions and a consent form will be sent to you prior to the interview.
4. The interview will be conducted face to face, and individual interview will be recorded with the participant's approval.
5. As part of the study process, you will be able to withdraw your participation and data at any time within twenty eight [28] days of the interview.

Please note that your involvement in this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have your participation, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation.

Data Storage

All interview data used in this study will be kept in a locked and secure filing cabinet and password protected computers in the Department of Rural Health, University of Tasmania. Data analysis and subsequent writing of the thesis will be stored in secure servers which are password protected.

The data will be destroyed after a period of five years from thesis submission by placing them in sealed bags which will then be removed and shredded by a contractor employed specifically to remove confidential waste from the University of Tasmania. Electronic data will be deleted from the secure servers of the Department of Rural Health after five years from thesis submission.

Result of Investigation

The thesis will be made publicly available via Australian Digital Theses which can be accessed at UTAS Library and/or in the form of publications (e.g. journals, book chapters) derived from this study. Participants who require access to the research findings of this study will be given the web address of the thesis and/or publication.

Confidentiality

Interview data will be re-identifiable from private and personal information such as marriage status, physical health status, psychological problems and personal health information/behaviours. During data analysis, each participant is assigned a numerical code such as participant 01, participant 02, etc. However, any citations from the interview data will be presented in such a way that the background and identities of the participant cited will be absolutely protected. It means that any information you supply will not identify you as a participant.

Ethics approval and concerns/complaints

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (reference number: H10957). If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, you should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants.

Contact persons

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study, please feel free to contact either Dr. Quynh Lê on ph (03) 6324 4053 or Yun Yue on ph (03) 6324 4000. You are welcome to contact either of us at any time to discuss issues relating to this research study.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.

If you wish to take part in it, please sign the attached consent form and return it by dropping it in the collection box at the Office of International Services or using a self-addressed envelope provided.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Dr. Quynh LÊ Dr Rosa McManamey Dr Thao LÊ Yun YUE

Information Sheet for Survey Distributors

Title: Health and Wellbeing of International Students in an Australian Tertiary Context

Name of Investigators:

This study is a Doctor of Philosophy research project. The Chief investigator and Co-investigators are Dr Quynh Lê, Dr Rosa McManamey and Dr Thao Lê who are the supervisors of student investigator Yun (Maria) YUE.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are to investigate the factors that influence international students' health and wellbeing, to examine types of coping strategies used by international students to adjust themselves to the new environment, and to evaluate different sources of social support and their effectiveness.

Benefit of the Study

The major benefit for the international students involved is the good chance to share their views on the adjustment problems they have encountered, effective coping strategies that have been used and ways to obtain effective social support from families, friends and universities in their daily life and academic context. They may also offer suggestions for future international students who intend to study in Australia.

Study procedures:

We would appreciate your kind assistance in making this study known to international students and staff, especially those staff who deal with international. We would like to recruit approximately 340 international students to participate in a survey and approximately 15 international students and 5 staff to participate in an interview. These students should be currently studying in UTAS on either the Launceston or Hobart campus for at least six months.

For Survey

The questionnaire will be available online and in print. The online version is administered by a professional website Survey Monkey. You will be provided a web address (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8R98DYG>) of the questionnaire by email,

Responses collected online will be conveniently processed by Survey Monkey.

For those students who prefer to fill out a paper questionnaire, with your permission, we will place hardcopies of the questionnaire and information about the study at agreed locations. Pre-paid and self-addressed envelopes and a collection box will also be provided.

Interview

For students who are interested in participating in an interview, we will provide an informational sheet and a consent form for interview for their information at agreed locations.

Data storage

The data will be stored and kept in a locked filing cabinet in the investigator's office at the Department of Rural Health, Anne O'Byrne Centre, Launceston, Tasmania. Data analysis and subsequent writing of the thesis will be protected by saved in secure servers which are password protected.

The data will be destroyed after a period of five years from thesis submission by placing them in sealed bags which are will then be removed and shredded by a contractor employed specifically to remove confidential waste from the University of Tasmania.

Please note that the online questionnaire will be managed by Survey Monkey in the USA which stores all the online questionnaire data of this project. The data will be removed from Survey Monkey at the completion of data collection. Electronic data and interview transcription will be deleted from the secure servers of the Department of Rural Health after five years from thesis submission.

Ethics approval and concerns/complaints:

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (reference number: H10957). If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, you should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants.

Contact persons

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study, please feel free to contact either Dr. Quynh Lê on ph (03) 6324 4053 or Yun Yue on ph (03) 6324 4000. You are welcome to contact either of us at any time to discuss issues relating to this research study.

Thank you for your kind support.

Dr. Quynh Lê Dr Rosa McManamey Dr Thao Lê Yun YUE

Consent Form for Interview Participants

Title: **Health and Wellbeing of International Students in a Tertiary Context**

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this project.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves exploring various factors that influence international students' health and wellbeing, examining types of coping strategies used by international students, and evaluating the effectiveness of social support offered to these students.
4. I understand that I will participate in a 30-minute-interview, which will be audio taped with my permission, and I am entitled to receive a transcript, which I may edit or modify if I wish.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years from submission of thesis by the student investigator, and will then be destroyed at the end of the fifth year.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.
8. I understand that the researchers will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time within twenty eight [28] days of the interview without any consequence, and if I so wish, may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature:

Date:

Statement by Investigator

- I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.
- The participant received the Information Sheet where my details are provided. The participant therefore has had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of Investigator

Signature:

Date:

Consent Form for Survey Distributors

Title: **Health and Wellbeing of International Students in a Tertiary Context**

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this project.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves exploring various factors that influence international students' health and wellbeing, examining types of coping strategies used by international students, and evaluating effectiveness of social support.
4. I understand that I will distribute the paper questionnaire and disseminate information about the online questionnaire. As to the online version, I will be provided the URL (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8R98DYG>) of the questionnaire by email, and I will bring it to the attention of the international students at the University of Tasmania in my routine communication with them. For those students who prefer paper questionnaire, I will place the questionnaire and information sheet about the study at my service locations and will provide self-addressed return envelopes and a box for collection.
5. I understand that I will provide an informational sheet and a consent form for interview to those students who are interested in a follow-up interview at my service locations. Students may contact the researcher via the contact details specified in the information sheet.
6. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years after the submission of the PhD thesis, and will then be destroyed at the end of 5 years.
7. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study, if any, may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.
8. I understand that the researchers will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.

Name of Survey Distributor: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

- I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this survey distributor and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.
- The survey distributor has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so he/she has the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to assist in this project.

Name of Survey Investigator

Signature:

Date:

Sample Flyer

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

If you:

- are a full-fee paying international student who has come to UTAS for full time study;
- have been in Tasmania for more than 6 months; and
- are studying on the Hobart or Launceston Campus.

We would like to invite you to participate in a survey entitled: “Health and Wellbeing of International Students”

Please Contact

Yun YUE

University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania

Tel: (03) 6324 4000

Email: yyue@utas.edu.au

It will be a great opportunity to express your opinions on what affects your own life!

Initially designed questionnaire instrument



Health and Wellbeing of International students in a Tertiary Context

Dear fellow students,

You are warmly invited to participate in a survey conducted by the Chief Investigator Dr Quynh Lê and PhD student Yun Yue in fulfilment of the requirements for her PhD.

The survey is designed to investigate the factors that influence international students' health and wellbeing. Your kind assistance in completing this survey and returning it to the UDRH at the below address by 15 May 2010 would be very much appreciated. A pre-paid envelop is provided for your convenience.

Yun YUE (Maria)
University Department of Rural Health
Locked Bag 1372
Launceston, TAS 7250

For assistance or further information, please contact any member of the research team listed in the attached Information Sheet.

Thank you for taking your time to complete this survey.

Part A: About you

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box of the following questions:

1. Gender:

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

2. Age:

- ☐ Under 20
☐ 20-24
☐ Over 24

3. I am from:

- ☐ Asia (other than the Middle East)
☐ Middle East (e.g. Iran, Israel, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates)

- ☐ Europe
- ☐ North America
- ☐ South America
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Other, please specify

4. Academic Faculty:

- ☐ Education/Arts
- ☐ Science/Engineering & Technology/AMC
- ☐ Health Science
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Commerce/Business

5. What degree are you currently pursuing?

- ☐ Undergraduate
- ☐ Postgraduate by coursework
- ☐ Postgraduate by research
- ☐ Other, (please specify)

6. Length of stay in Australia (up to now):

- ☐ Less than 12 months
- ☐ Over one year to two years
- ☐ Over two years to four years
- ☐ Over four years

7. In my opinion, my standard of English for my study at this university is:

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Just fine
- ☐ Weak
- ☐ Very weak

8. Marriage status:

- ☐ Single (never married)
- ☐ Married or de facto without children
- ☐ Married or de facto with children
- ☐ Divorced or separated

9. Which type of accommodation are you living in currently?

- ☐ Shared house or rental house
- ☐ Hostel
- ☐ Home stay
- ☐ My own house or my family's (or relative's) house

10. The primary source of your financial support is:

- ☐ Family
- ☐ Own savings
- ☐ Paid work
- ☐ Scholarship from Australia/own country/other organisation
- ☐ Other(s), please specify:

11. Do you have a car/bike?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. How do you describe your physical health?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Just fine
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ Very poor

Part B: Your views on adjustment problems

Please tick the box that best describes your agreement with the following statements:

Your views on the general living aspects

	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
13. I am satisfied with my accommodation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 17. | I am satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

Your views on the academic aspects

- | | | Not at
all
(1) | A little
(2) | Somewhat
(3) | Very
(4) | Extremely
(5) |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18. | I am satisfied with my English ability. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. | I am satisfied with the academic staff. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. | I am satisfied with the admin staff. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. | I am satisfied with my academic performance. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. | International students are well looked after by the University. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. | I am familiar with the university educational system here. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. | I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. | I feel included in my class. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your views on socio-cultural aspects

- | | | Not at
all
(1) | A little
(2) | Somewhat
(3) | Very
(4) | Extremely
(5) |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 26. | I feel comfortable with the Australian way of life. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. | I am used to the Australian accent. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. | I make friends with local people easily. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

29.	I have many friends at the University.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	Local people want to know about my culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	Racism occurs in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	I am treated unfairly because of my cultural background.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your view on personal psychological aspects

	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
34.	I feel homesick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.	I feel upset easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	I feel lonely in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.	It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.	I feel tired easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39.	I feel motivated to study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40.	I feel safe in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41.	I feel comfortable in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42.	I enjoy living in Tasmania	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43.	I feel restless in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part C: Your attitude to health behaviours

Please tick the box that best describes your situation:

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)
44. How often do you eat fast food (e.g. MacDonald, KFC, Hungry Jacks, Fish & chips)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. How often do you eat vegetables?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. How often do you eat fruits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47. How often do you skip breakfast?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48. How often do you smoke?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. How often do you drink alcohol?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50. How often do you experience sleeplessness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
51. How often do you have exercises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part D: Your attitudes to coping strategies

Please tick the box that best describes “**When I am in trouble, I tend to...**”:

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)
52. Make a plan for my next steps.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
53. Take a direct approach to deal with the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
54. Focus on solving the problem, and put other things aside if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55. Wait for the right time to deal with the problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56. Try to get advice from someone on what to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57. Try to get sympathetic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

understanding from
someone.

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 58. | Try to vent my feeling. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 59. | Reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 60. | Force myself to do other things to take my mind off the problem. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 61. | Try to look at it from a positive way. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 62. | Pretend that it hasn't really happened. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 63. | Accept the reality. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 64. | Try to find support in my religion. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Part E: Your attitudes to social supports

Please tick the box that shows the level of **support** you get from EACH of the following sources.

- | | Never
(1) | Rarely
(2) | Sometimes
(3) | Often
(4) | Very Often
(5) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 65. Family | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 66. Friends (incl. home stay) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 67. University | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 68. Community | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Note: If you would like to participate in a 30-minute follow-up interview, please let us know:

Your name: Phone:

Your Email:

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Final version of the questionnaire instrument

Health and Wellbeing of International students in a Tertiary

Context

Dear fellow students,

You are warmly invited to participate in a survey conducted by the Chief Investigator Dr. Quynh Lê and PhD student Yun Yue in fulfilment of the requirements for her PhD.

The survey is designed to investigate the factors that influence international students' health and wellbeing. Your kind assistance in completing this survey and returning it to the UDRH at the below address by 15 May 2010 would be very much appreciated. A pre-paid envelop is provided for your convenience.

Yun YUE (Maria)
University Department of Rural Health
Locked Bag 1372
Launceston, TAS 7250

For assistance or further information, please contact any member of the research team listed in the attached Information Sheet.

Thank you for taking your time to complete this survey.

Part A: About you

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box of the following questions:

1. Gender:

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

2. Age:

- ☐ Under 20
☐ 20-24
☐ Over 24

3. I am from:

- ☐ Asia (other than the Middle East)
☐ Middle East (e.g. Iran, Israel, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates)
☐ Europe
☐ North America
☐ South America
☐ Africa
☐ Other, please specify

4. Academic Faculty:

- ☐ Education/Arts

☐ Science/Engineering & Technology/AMC

☐ Health Science

☐ Law

☐ Commerce/Business

5. What degree are you currently pursuing?

☐ Undergraduate

☐ Postgraduate by coursework

☐ Postgraduate by research

☐ Other, (please specify)

6. Length of stay in Australia (up to now):

☐ Less than 12 months

☐ Over one year to two years

☐ Over two years to four years

☐ Over four years

7. My standard of English for my study at this university is:

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Just fine

☐ Weak

☐ Very weak

8. Marriage status:

☐ Single (never married)

☐ Married or de facto without children

☐ Married or de facto with children

☐ Divorced or separated

9. Which type of accommodation are you living in currently?

☐ Shared house or rental house

☐ Hostel

☐ Home stay

☐ My own house or my family's (or relative's) house

10. The primary source of your financial support is:

☐ Family

☐ Own savings

☐ Paid work

☐ Scholarship from Australia/own country/other organization

☐ Other(s), please specify:

11. Do you have a car/bike?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. How do you describe your physical health?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Just fine

☐ Poor

☐ Very poor

Part B: Your views on adjustment problems

Please tick the box that best describes your agreement with the following statements:

Your views on the general living aspects

	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
13. I am satisfied with my accommodation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I am worried about the cost of living in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I am happy with the transport system in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I am happy with the availability of food in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I am satisfied with job opportunities in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I feel safe in Tasmania	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your views on the academic aspects

	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
19. I am satisfied with my English ability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20.	I am satisfied with the academic staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	I am satisfied with the admin staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	I am satisfied with my academic performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	International students are well looked after by the University.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	I am familiar with the university educational system here.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.	I have been well informed about the University of Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	I feel included in my class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your views on socio-cultural aspects

		Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
27.	I am used to the Australian accent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	I make friends with local people easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	I have many friends at the University.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	I have many opportunities to participate in local activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	Local people want to know about my culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part C: Your views on racism discrimination

Please tick the box that best describes your situation:

		Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
32.	Racism occurs in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	I am treated unfairly because of my cultural background.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part D: Your views on psychological issues

Please tick the box that best describes your situation:

	Not at all (1)	A little (2)	Somewhat (3)	Very (4)	Extremely (5)
34. I feel homesick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. I feel upset easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. I feel lonely in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. It is hard for me to share my personal problems with friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. I feel tired easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. I feel motivated to study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. I feel restless in Tasmania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part E: Your attitudes on health behaviours

Please tick the box that best describes your situation:

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)
41. How often do you eat fast food?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. How often do you eat vegetables?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. How often do you eat fruits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. How often do you skip breakfast?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. How often do you smoke?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. How often do you drink alcohol?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47. How often do you have exercises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part F: Your attitudes on coping strategies

Please tick the box that best describes “When I am in trouble, I tend to...”

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Very Often (5)
48. Make a plan for my next steps.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. Take a direct approach to deal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | with the problem. | | | | | |
| 50. | Focus on solving the problem,
and put other things aside if
necessary. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 51. | Wait for the right time to deal
with the problem | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 52. | Try to get advice from someone
on what to do. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 53. | Try to get sympathetic
understanding from someone. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 54. | Try to vent my feeling. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 55. | Reduce the amount of effort I'm
putting into solving the problem. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 56. | Force myself to do other things to
take my mind off the problem. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 57. | Try to look at it from a positive
way. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 58. | Pretend that it hasn't really
happened. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 59. | Accept the reality. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 60. | Try to find support in my
religion. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Note: If you would like to participate in a 30-minute follow-up interview, please let us know:

Your name: Phone:, and

Your Email:

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Interview Questions for Students

Title: **Health and Wellbeing of International Students in a Tertiary Context**

1. How would you describe your health status?
2. Have you experienced any physical illness after coming to Australia? Please give details.
3. Have you experienced any psychological problems, such as depression or anxiety after coming to Australia? Please give details.
4. How do you feel about living in Tasmania?
5. If you are asked to give advice to your friends in your home country about living and studying in Tasmania, what advice would you give them?
6. What are some of the biggest challenges to your life in Tasmania?
7. How do you feel about the ways by which you deal with these challenges?
8. With the benefit of hindsight, would you do things differently?
9. What are your sources of support in your study and daily life? What do they mean to you personally?
10. Is there any interesting experience about your life here that you would like to share?
11. Is there any other thing you would like to share in this interview?

Interview Questions for Staff Members

Title: **Health and Wellbeing of International Students in a Tertiary Context**

1. Could you say something about international students in Tasmania, especially students in UTAS? Based on your understanding, what factors would affect international students' health and wellbeing?
2. What kind of general living problems would be facing by the international students in Tasmania?
3. What kind of academic difficulties would they encounter?
4. Do you think they would encounter any social-cultural difficulties during the process of cultural transition? Could you please give me some details?
5. International student is the group of people who are susceptible to various psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety, loneliness and homesickness. Could you say something about this?
6. Are there many international students seeking support from you? What kind of problems do they normally seek support? And normally how do you provide support to them? Do you think these supports are helpful?
7. Do you have any suggestions to current or future international students who are studying or will be studying in UTAS?
8. Do you have any suggestions to the university or government in terms of support of international students?

Appendix 3 Published papers

- Paper 1: Yue, Y., & Lê, Q. (2011). International students: Their health and education journey. In Q. Le (Ed.), *Health and well-being: A social and cultural perspective* (pp. 173-184). New York: NOVA Science Publishers.
- Paper 2: Yue, Y., & Lê, Q. (In press). International students in a new cultural environment. In T. Le & Q. Le (Eds.), *Linguistic diversity and cultural identity: A global perspective*. New York: NOVA Science Publishers.

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